# サイコメ

PSYCOME

1

殺人鬼と死春期を

水城水城

illustration

生煮え

Mizuki Mizushiro × Namanie

PSYCHO LOVE COMEDY

ファミ通文庫

サイコメ
PSYCOME
PSYCHO
LOVE
COMEDY
1
殺人鬼と
死春期を

人殺しども！
このわたしが担任になった以上、
一人残らず苦痛と恐怖で屈服させてやる！
徹底的に蹂躙し、絶望させてやる。
貴様らブタに、人権などないものと知れ!!
Sudden Ground
さよなら日常、こんにちは異常

「……ごめん。そろそろどいてくれない？胸の上から」
Brutal Under Ground
ボーイ・ミーツ・ガスマスク

# The Murderers of a Purgatory Regeneration School
# プルガトリウム更生学院の殺人鬼たち

「……ふふっ」
薄桃色の唇が、愉悦の曲線を描く。
Lucifer In The Cactus
煉獄の素顔と、狂奏のグロウル

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illustration:生煮え

# Preliminary Bell / Introduction

Kinnnnnnnng, konnnnnnnnnng, kannnnnnnng, konnnnnnnnnng...

The tilted and filthy speaker broadcasted the hoarse rings of a bell.

Sounding like some kind of death cry, it made Kyousuke lift up his face from lying down and open his eyes.

"....."

The confusion about his location was shortly dispelled.

While remembering, an intense feeling of exhaustion and weariness filled his body instantly.

Kyousuke scratched his bed head and took a glance at his surroundings then sighed.

(...Sigh. Why do I have to enroll in this freaking kind of place?)

The concrete walls surrounding him on all sides were filled with cracked, broken or depressed spots--densely covered with obscene and vulgar graffiti.

"FUCK" "Killed!" "Die die die die kill kill kill kill" "18782 + 18782 = 37564"[1] "SCHOOL KILLER" "really wanna ○ Kurumiya-tan" "←you're gonna get erased for that" "←too late" "Wish for world pea" (written in blood, cut off).

All sorts of profanity even covered the floor and the ceiling, tables and chairs, adding a flavor of disaster to the devastated classroom. The windows were all installed with dull black bars of thick iron.

But the most unpleasant part was not the classroom but the classmates.

Take for example, Kyousuke's position in the center of the front row, the boy sitting on his right.

"Huh? What da fuck are ya lookin' at...? Dirty shit's gotta get disinfected!"

A red mohican hairstyle. A vicious face with earrings.

A tie with black stripes hanging loosely. From the gaps in the sloppily worn shirt, a muscular body could be seen. The jacket and pants look of the uniform did not suit him at all.

Judging purely from appearance this guy was the one Kyousuke wanted to avoid the most. Even so, this guy attracted too much attention and when he grabbed the front of Kyousuke's shirt, it was impossible to ignore him anymore.

Reckless young blood should have its limits. Kyousuke never expected the guy to suddenly come looking for trouble.

Sweat flowed across Kyousuke's face while he tried to put on his best shit eating grin.

"Haha... No, nothing at all? It's just that you're looking so sharp, I couldn't help but take a few more glances. Watchamacallit, oh right... The forefront of fashion? Especially the hair. Isn't that a rooster head? Looks super on you! It's like the perfect combo for the contents inside, the brain that's no different from a chicken's. Hahaha... Say, it's time you let go."

"Huhhhhhhhh!? Imma gonna kill you, bastaaaaard!?"

Kyousuke had tried to his best to say positive things, but his efforts were completely crushed.

Accompanied with a sharp roar, the arm, bulging with muscles and tendons, lifted Kyousuke up.

His ass covered in midair above the seat, Kyousuke was pulled up while the guy glared angrily at him, almost to the point of touching faces. But Kyousuke was not scared.

"...Sigh, it's my bad. I'll apologize to you, so calm down, okay? Thrown here inexplicably, I'm nowhere in a good mood..."

Kyousuke killed his smile and retorted back at close range.

Then he delivered a fierce headbutt to the dumbass's forehead.

"Get this straight... I'm not leaving you half dead once I get started, mohican bastard!"

The classmates who had been watching quietly instantly went into an intense commotion.

All wearing uniforms, the boy and girls looked to be the same age in appearance, but apart from that, none of them had anything obvious in common whether in appearance, temperament or reactions.

"Nice going, you two, fight! I was just getting bored. Make it flash and stuff, 'kay!?"

"It's just first few days and there's so much restless young blood already... Fufu. Don't get me caught in it, alright?"

"H-Heeheehee... Using a bench to do this to the fingernails, one after another... Then do that to the fingertips, one after another..."

Instigators, jokers, incomprehensible boys.

"S-S-S-S-Super bad! W-W-W-W-Who's gonna stop 'em~!?"

A timid girl was looking left and right in panic.

There was also a girl completely ignoring the classroom atmosphere, yawning with her legs crossed, painting her nails while going "...boring."

There was no uniformity anywhere.

However, Kyousuke knew. From the moment since this school started, the moment they were gathered in this classroom, he knew that no one here was anything normal.

So, was Kyousuke a freak as well? The answer was "No."

Kyousuke grumbled. Suppressing his surging anger and displeasure, he glared at the classmates' faces.

Kyousuke hated and cursed these people, wishing from the bottom of his heart to have nothing to do with them.

This bunch of people were the reason for Kyousuke's hatred.

"Come, Mohican. Let me do plastic surgery to fix up your shit ass face... With my fist, of course."

"Huh!? What you say? ...I can't stand this no more! Imma rip you to pieces!"

Mohican grabbed Kyousuke's collar with his left while swinging his right.

Clenched so hard it was making a sound, the fist flew vigorously...

Crick crick crick... Crash!

At this moment, the classroom door opened and a girl appeared.

Holding documents in one arm, dressed in a brand name women's suit, she was probably the teacher.

She should be this class's homeroom teacher. Say, she's really young--rather, too young.

"...Hey, what are you two doing there? Or you want to be disciplined all over again?"

The cute girl, whose hair looked like it was made into a bob cut using a sharp instrument, glared at Kyousuke and Mohican who were frozen stiff.

She was only 1.4m tall or so. If the women's suit was swapped for children's clothing and the documents replaced by a backpack-style schoolbag, she would be the very image of an elementary schooler.

" "....." "

Instantly, silence quietly descended--Almost.

"Pishposh. Disciplined~? Lil' gal wanna discipline moi? That's fucking awesome~ Yahahahahaha!"

Mohican released Kyousuke, pointed at the girl and roared with belly-splitting laughter.

The girl raised an eyebrow. Shouting "very well" she stretched, put down her documents, leaned against the lectern and tossed the bangs of her bob cut as though finding things bothersome.

"Hoo... Oh well, since it's the first day after all, I'll turn a blind eye. Stop your annoying farce until my mood goes bad... Understand? Or else it's instant discipline time. No objections allowed."

"Pupu. Heh, that's really fucking rich. Why doncha try disciplining me!? But before that..."

Licking his thick lips, Mohican grabbed his chair with both hands.

There was no time to exclaim in surprise. Mohican raised the chair high above his head, stepped on a table and jumped, attacking the girl. Hesitation, deliberation, holding back, mercy--None of those thoughts or emotions happened.

"Cry your sorry ass while you die, little girly! Yahaaaaaaaaa!"

The chair swung down, straight towards the head beneath. The strike coming from battered stainless steel crushed the girl's tiny skull--That was what Kyousuke expected but in the next instant...

"Hmph. Retard... You're the one who'll be crying, Mohican! ...You asked for death yourself."

Towards the ring-pierced nose, a steel pipe popped up from somewhere and swung down.

The sound of a heavy impact. Leaking a muffled cry of "Bugya!?", Mohican released the chair which fell. Blood splattered, soiling the girl's tender pale cheeks.

"Good grief, no upbringing at all... Oh well, whatever. From now on, I shall be the one to teach you... Teach you what? Fear and loyalty. Well, perhaps you might actually die, but you won't mind, right? ...Hey, what's your answer? Answer nowwwwwwwww!?"

Walking up to nose-smashed Mohican who was rolling all over the floor in pain, the girl swung the steel pipe again. Who knows how many times, again and again, stubbornly.

"......Huh?"

By the time he regained his senses, Kyousuke found himself collapsed on the floor.

The students screamed "Heeeee!?" The air in the classroom was freezing.

"What the fuck? ...This guy, what happened? Why did the teacher, do that kind of..."

From his position, powerless, Kyousuke could not see due to the tables and chairs in his way, but he could hear every time the girl raised her arm and descend, there were screams of "S-Stop!" "Not this spot too!? Eye! My fucking eye!?" along with new blood splatters.

Poosh, poosh, poosh, kra! ...

"...Muu? Looks like he's in ecstasy. Or is he dead? Whatever."

Resting the twisted steel pipe, covered in blood and fat, on her shoulder, the girl returned to the lectern.

"Hey, you over there. How much longer are you going to sit on the floor? ...Do you want to get disciplined too, brat?"

Lost in a daze, Kyousuke only returned to his senses after hearing this and looked up.

The round, adorable eyes were shining brightly, looking down at Kyousuke.

"...!?"

He was definitely going "to be killed" if he did not stand up immediately.

Kyousuke got up, supporting himself with a chair, then scrambled his way to his seat with his upper body lowered.

(I-I'm saved.) Just as Kyousuke thought that and breathed a sigh of relief, immediately...

"Hey you. Answer? Answeeeeeeeeeeeer!?"

"Y-Yeeeeeeeeeees!?"

"...What? So you're hankering for discipline, eh?"

"Eh?"

The girl licked the fresh blood splattered on her face and smiled sadistically.

Her behavior was impossible to understand. Kyousuke shook his head desperately for dear life.

"N-No! This is my honest intention to obey, Sensei! It was a misunderstanding, misunderstanding!"

Kyousuke's brain added a mosaic to the blood bath and the collapsed figure, exiling the sight from his consciousness.

Seeing Kyousuke explaining desperately, the girl scoffed.

"...Whatever. Open your eyes wide and look carefully. What you are feeling towards me is exactly fear right now. Remember that very~ well in your heart. Kukuku... The rest of you lot, get it too? Anyone who bares their fangs at me will be turned to "this bloody mess of a thing" without

exception by me. Don't oppose me if you value your worthless lives! Obey! Flatter me! Prostrate yourselves! Filthy swine!"

The girl threatened using a mumbling lolita voice while swinging her steel pipe down.

The flesh and blood originally sticking to the pipe flew to the side, forcing Kyousuke to recall the scene he had just witnessed.

In this atmosphere where everyone was cowering, only Kyousuke's left neighbor, a girl, answered "yes~~" listlessly while using tweezers to attach rhinestones and swarovski crystals to her painted nails.

--Apart from that, it was silent

Violence beyond normal parameters had slaughtered the very atmosphere itself.

"...So. Self-intro is a bit late. I am Kurumiya Hijiri. Starting today, I'll be the homeroom teacher taking care of you lot, Year 1 Class A. My favorite words are 'submission' and 'domination.' Most hated words are 'brat' and 'shrimp.' Despite how I may look, I am twenty-years-old, the prime of life. Pleased to meet you all."

The final reveal was so unreal that everyone doubted their ears. Hence, no one answered.

Who knows what would happen to anyone who opposed the will of this girl--Kurumiya.

"...Huh?" Confirming the answer of silence given by the class, Kurumiya slowly widened her eyes.

"If another smart ass remark popped out like just now, I'd be able to do some good disciplining... How stingy. Kukuku... Although things are less than perfect the way I see it, let me give you a passing grade for now."

Saying that, Kurumiya stopped talking for a moment and swept her gaze slowly throughout the classroom in a circle, examining each student in the class in turn. After staring at the trembling Kyousuke for ten seconds, she suddenly smiled, producing a radiant smile.

But there was no laughter in her eyes at all.

Like offering a requiem or performing a hymn.

Kurumiya announced.

"Welcome to our school, the Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation. Murderers."

# Period 1 - Goodbye to Normal Life, Hello to Abnormal Life / "Sludge Over Ground"

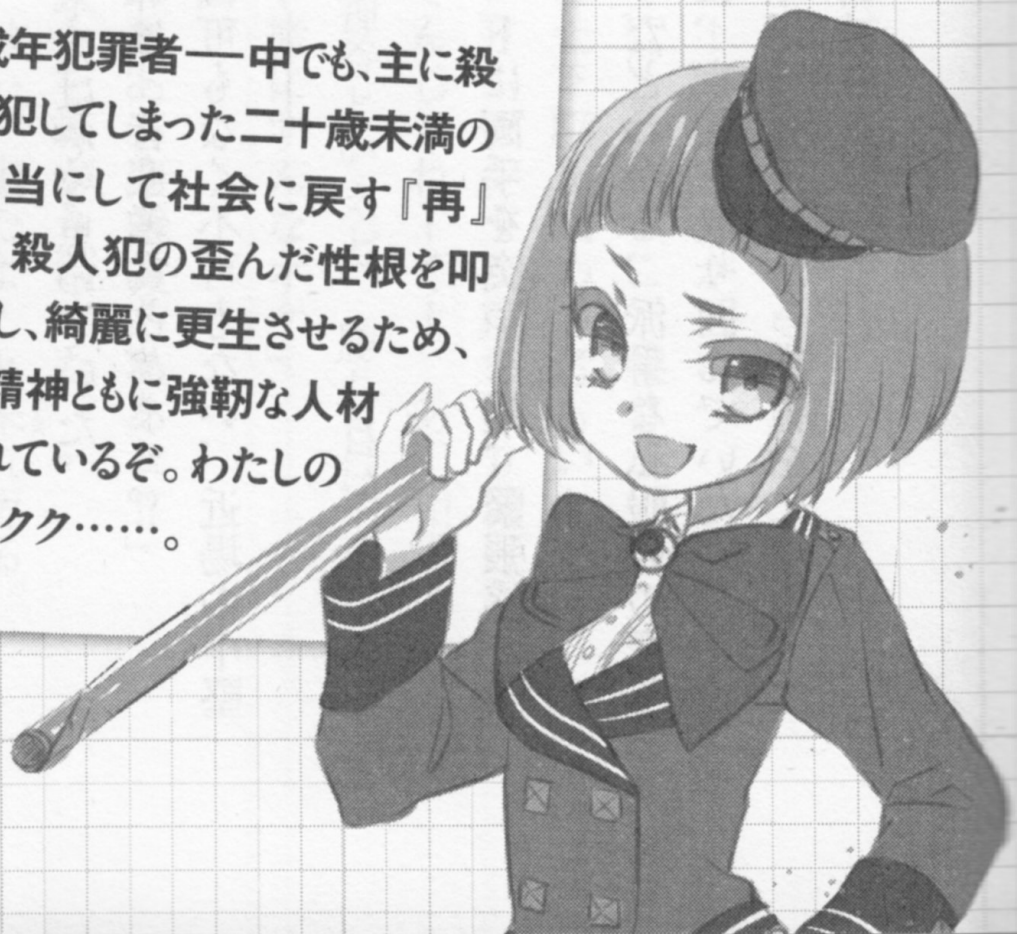
Q. What is the Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation?

A. An institution aiming to "re"-educate juvenile criminals--mostly boys and girls convicted of murder but below the age of twenty--to truly rehabilitate them for their return to society. In order to correct the twisted personalities of convicted murderers, to have them repent, cleanse and renew themselves, the selected teachers are all equipped with resilient minds and bodies. Like me for example. Kukuku...

# Sludge Over Ground
# さよなら日常、こんにちは異常

## 一時間目

**Q** プルガトリウム更生学院って？

**A** 未成年犯罪者――中でも、主に殺人を犯してしまった二十歳未満の男女を、真っ当にして社会に戻す『再』教育施設だ。殺人犯の歪んだ性根を叩き直して矯正し、綺麗に更生させるため、教師も肉体・精神ともに強靭な人材が選りすぐられているぞ。わたしのように、なァ。ククク……。

Kamiya Kyousuke was a very ordinary youth. At least, that was what he believed.

Ordinary in appearance, ordinary in grades, ordinary in athletics, a hat trick. His hobbies were music appreciation and video gaming.

Originally set to graduate six months later at a middle school in the city, whether or not he got into the school of his choice, he would have enrolled in a local backbone public high school. Kyousuke, that kind of perfectly ordinary fifteen-year-old boy, was currently...

"....."

It was inside an abandoned and half-wrecked warehouse.

Dressed in a black tracksuit, hair messed up, hands in his jacket pockets, he was checking out his situation with vicious eyes full of tension.

One, two, three, four... A total of twelve people. Dressed in ostentatious casual wear, they were obviously young hooligans from appearance, holding metal bats, chains, bars and timber, surrounding Kyousuke.

One of them, with a pompadour hairstyle and dressed in a Japanese embroidered souvenir jacket, was glaring straight at Kyousuke.

"So you're the punkass known as the legendary 'Slayer'... and 'Megadeath,' that Kamiya Kyousuke?"

"...Nope, you've got it wrong. I'm just the ordinary Kamiya Kyousuke."

"Ordinary my ass! You dare call yerself ordinary! Hah! Wake up and stop wit' da dream talkin'!"

At the pompadour guy's scoffing, the rest began to concur.

But just as Kyousuke went "...Oh?" and cast a shocking glare, the hooligans instantly went "Eee!?" "D-Don't kill me!" and cowered and begged. Some of them were almost about to cry while others begged for their lives on their knees. Extreme cowardice.

Soon, the pompadour guy started yelling:

"Y-Y-You bastards! W-W-W-W-W-What are you afraid of!? Th-There's only one opponent... E-E-E-E-E-E-E-Even if it's 'Sonic Syndicate' Kamiya, it's not like there's no chance of winning--"

"That's the name of the biker gang I wiped out earlier. Don't compare me with those shit heads, morons."

Kyousuke patted the other guy lightly and retorted. Then instantly:

"Gyahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!? My arm!? My aaaaaaaaaarrrrrrrrrrrrmmmmm!?"

The pompadour guy held his arms and screamed, falling on the asphalt road surface.

Seeing the way the pompadour guy screamed, Kyousuke was quite exasperated. "...O-Oh, it appeared."

This was most likely a type of over reaction that hooligans were good at. Just a shove on the shoulder and they go 'Oh no. The bone's broken. Oh no." A common trick.

Kyousuke merely patted the guy slightly forcefully so nothing should have happened to his arm.

--However.

"Mobu-saaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan!? Shit... That's impossible! Mobu-san got done in with one hit!?"

"M-My arm's a goner completely... Such ridiculous power. This fucker, is he really human...!?"

"Hey, let's all attack together, bros! This fucker's Mobu-san's enemy. Slaughter him, put him in a sack and dump the corpse out in the wild!"

Kyousuke did not know if the hooligans had failed to see past the pompadour guy's third-rate acting skills. After their buddy was done in, their anger turned into killing intent. What a bunch of naive fools.

"...Good grief. As much as I don't really want to get violent..."

Thing had developed past the point where dialogue could solve the issue.

"Ehhhhhhhhh... Ouch... Ouch, mommy... Sob (weeping)"

Even with his buddies taking care of him, the pompadour guy continued to cry and sob. Glancing at the crying face with half-closed eyes, Kyousuke made his decision and slowly did some arm stretching exercises. After that, he began stretching his legs.

"By this point, it can't be helped... Since you wanna fight, bring out your real skills, 'kay?"

Waist, shoulder, neck... While turning each joint in sequence, he turned to look at the surrounding hooligans again.

Seven were armed and four were bare handed. Conversely, he was unarmed and alone.

Unfavorable no matter how you looked, nevertheless it was not a problem...

The ones trembling in fright was not Kyousuke but these guys.

Casually finishing his warm-up exercises, Kyousuke smiled fearlessly.

"...What's the matter? Bring it on. Imma make you guys repent and become new people."

× × ×

"Jeez Onii-chan, you got into another fight again! Clearly it was just an errand, but how did it become this...? Should I forbid you from leaving the house now!?"

"...Sorry, Ayaka."

Lectured at the entrance as soon as he got home, Kyousuke hung his head in dejection.

The intimidating aura all gone from his face, only scratches and bruises remained. Originally black, the tracksuit was white from dust and dirt. Ending up so unsightly, getting scolded was only expected.

"But they were the ones picking a fight... The whole lot was blocking the way in front of the convenience store so I simply reminded them, but then they ended up going 'Show some respect yo' then it--"

"Enough with the excuses!"

The soup ladle struck Kyousuke's head.

Hand on her hip, pouting, the girl looked up and stared at Kyousuke with eyes of reprimand.

Her twintails were tied with purple checkered ribbons. She was dressed in an apron of the same color.

--Kamiya Ayaka. Thirteen years this year. The little sister who stood as Kyousuke's pride and joy.

"Onii-chan, jeez... Can't you stop making others worry? A trip to the convenience store should only take five minutes tops. I can't believe you spent an hour. Then you make excuses about some accident, but in the end, you just went and had a fight..."

Glared at intently by those wavering eyes, directed upwards, Kyousuke went into a panic.

"I-It's my fault... I'm wrong! Next time, I'll be careful..."

"Yes. Where have I heard that before? The time when you rushed into the gathering place of a large number of bikers. Onii-chan, how much more are you going to make Ayaka worry? No matter how strong you're at fighting, if you keep up with your unruly ways... One day, you'll get caught up in trouble where there's no return, do you get it!?"

"Ah, yeah... I'm really so sorry. Next time I'll be careful, honestly..."

Lectured and nagged at nonstop by the younger sister, Kyousuke felt more and more demoralized.

Ayaka's lecturing was too harsh. Kyousuke could not find any words to refute her.

Seeing her elder brother so useless and depressed, Ayaka sighed.

"...Oh well, fine. Since you got home safe and sound already. But you're covered in decoration, that's all."

A calm voice filled with relief. Kyousuke looked up to see Ayaka's gentle smile.

He felt strangely shy and could not help but turn his face away.

"Hmph... This bit of injury will heal with just a lick."

"Oh really? Let's do that."

--Lick.

ペロッ

"Hya!? W-What the heck!? S-Suddenly licking my face--"

"Didn't you just say that it'll heal with a lick? What 'hya!?' That's so cute for a reaction!"

"......Shaddup."

Using his hands to cover his face where he was licked, Kyousuke stared back resentfully.

Even the murderous gaze, which caused hooligans to shit their pants in fright, was ineffective against the younger sister.

Ayaka winked mischievously and stuck out her pale pink tongue.

"Onii-chan, no matter how minor, injuries need to be properly disinfected, you know? Your clothes need to be washed too... Oh right, want a bath first? Dinner first? ...O-Or--"

"Don't say it! '--enjoy Ayaka?' or whatever, that's absolutely forbidden to say, okay!?"

"Eh? What are you talking about, Onii-chan? Ayaka wanted to say 'enjoy a popsicle' oh? Do you really want to get intimate with Ayaka that much, Onii-chan? Kusukusu."

Ayaka deliberately cocked her head and laughed suspiciously.

"...Hey. You must be playing me around, right? That's so obvious with the way you're twisting around."

Teased by his sister, Kyousuke's lips were upturned in a frown.

That said, he was not angry but simply tensing up the lips that would relax the moment he let go.

The tense, confrontational mood from when he first got home was already relaxed.

Kyousuke felt like this every time he returned home from a fight.

(Ayaka is really so amazing... If I had that kind of talent, I wouldn't need to have so many unnecessary fights. Doing this kind of stuff will make Ayaka worried as well--)

Kyousuke muttered and clenched his fists tightly.

This was the fists he continually honed and trained, even in his sleep, in order to protect his precious family from the world's "evil."

Using these two fists of iron, he had blown away naughty brats who had bullied Ayaka, blown away delinquents whom the naughty brats had summoned to avenge them, blown away hooligans whom the delinquents had summoned to avenge them, blown away ruffians whom the hooligans had summoned to avenge them...

Before he knew, he was already known as the Slayer and Megadeath.

Exaggerated nicknames attracted unbelievably troublesome characters thirsting for fights.

Thanks to that, apart from those types of characters, people all feared Kyousuke, especially girls. As soon as Kyousuke tried to strike up conversation, they would react in abject fear... Whenever Kyousuke confessed to a crush, the girl would immediately reject him by kneeling, prostrating and begging him for mercy. This sort of thing left a certain degree of trauma in Kyousuke's heart.

"...Onii-chan. It's time for Ayaka to return to the kitchen."

Tying up her apron again, Ayaka lifted up the soup ladle and announced with energetic vigor.

"Mom and Dad's business trip will continue for quite a while... Ayaka must be more competent! Onii-chan, you need to disinfect your injuries first, you know? Dinner will be ready shortly."

"Y-Yeah... I'm sorry for troubling you to take care of me all the time."

Kyousuke was filled with apologetic feelings towards this younger sister who was so competent that one could hardly associate with being only twelve years old.

Substituting for the parents who were busy with work, she not only went to school but also took care of all the house chores.

A far cry from the unworthy elder brother who knew nothing but how to win fights.

However, Ayaka--

"Ahaha, you're surely one to make others worry, Onii-chan. Without Ayaka, you really can't do anything... But then again, Ayaka is the same, you know? Only because Onii-chan is protecting Ayaka, that's why Ayaka can smile! Onii-chan, you must continue to stay by Ayaka's side and allow Ayaka to take care of you attentively, okay?"

Blushing slightly, she smiled purely and innocently.

Stating how much she needed this incompetent brother.

Hence, Kyousuke--

"Yeah, that goes without saying. I'll stay by your side forever, so take good care of me."

Looking forward to these irreplaceable days of normality, Kyousuke hoped they could persist forever.

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'Next news story. Just earlier at 6pm, at a warehouse in the eastern region of Ootsuki City, a number of men, estimated at twenty years of age or thereabouts, were found discovered, murdered.'

In a clean and tidy dining room that was decorated uniformly in white and light brown...

Sitting at the table, Kyousuke was currently munching on the cabbage rolls made by Ayaka personally.

"—Foo!?"

Spurt. Then Kyousuke choked violently.

Bent forward, Kyousuke kept coughing nonstop. Sitting opposite, Ayaka stood up in alarm.

"Onii-chan!? Umm... A-Are you okay!? Could there be something wrong with Ayaka's cooking--"

"N-No... TV... the... news..."

"Eh? ...What? TV news? What about the news on TV...?"

Seeing Ayaka frantically kick her chair away and stand up, Kyousuke pointed at the television screen.

Shown there was an old and unused warehouse. Roughly several hours earlier, Kyousuke had been taken there by some hooligans. That place... To think a murder incident took place? Also...

'The number of discovered bodies totalled twelve. On the bodies were numerous serious wounds and apparent signs of assault from blunt instruments. Also, the interior of the warehouse was scattered with a large number of metal bats and pipes that are suspected as the murderer's weapons. Police theorize that this group of men were caught up in some sort of conflict and are currently conducting further investigations regarding this incident.'

"N-No way... That place... Isn't it near our house? Roughly twenty minutes on foot..."

Staring in shock at the screen, Ayaka expressed her surprise.

Kyousuke was completely speechless. Simply organizing the situation in his mind was taking all his effort.

At the place where he had visited mere hours earlier, beaten up completely by Kyousuke, all the men had turned into corpses and were discovered by others... To think something like that happened? This made it look almost as though Kyousuke had...

Rounded them up and locked them in the warehouse to slaughter mercilessly, right?

"...Hey Onii-chan, what's the matter? You've gone pale from a while ago, you know? I don't really think it's possible, but... Onii-chan, could this incident--"

"I don't know! I don't know anything, anything at all!"

Kyousuke's voice was so loud that he even scared himself.

The angry snarl caused Ayaka to cower in fear.

But she immediately stood up and again and hugged the confused Kyousuke.

"Calm down, Onii-chan! Ayaka doesn't suspect you at all, Onii-chan? But Ayaka just worries if you might get caught up in some kind of incident, so..."

"..."

"Please... Tell Ayaka, okay? Did you visit that warehouse today, Onii-chan? What happened at the warehouse? Can you tell Ayaka? Take it slow."

Ayaka hugged Kyousuke's back gently while speaking.

Kyousuke's heart gradually calmed down in the face of this sister who was filled with the spirit of sacrifice.

The newscaster on television was already reading another piece of news.

"O-Okay... Sorry. It's fine now, Ayaka... Sorry."

"Don't apologize, Ayaka doesn't mind. Rather, Ayaka wants to know..."

"What happened today, right? ...I'll explain. At the time, I--"

--Kyousuke explained.

Taken to the empty warehouse to be beaten, he had taken down the twelve hooligans instead. Without using any weapons, he had taken them out barehanded. Of course, he had not killed anyone. After the fight, he had left that bunch of hooligans that were all covered in wounds, instantly leaving the premises.

Soon after hearing Kyousuke's story, Ayaka's face tensed up uncharacteristically.

"In other words, after Onii-chan left, someone went to the empty warehouse and killed those people... That's what happened? You'd better find the police and explain..."

"Yeah... I guess. I should talk to Officer Zenikata at least."

Taking his cellphone out of his pocket, Kyousuke called the number of the familiar detective.

Although out of necessity rather than choice, Kyousuke's constant getting into trouble had caused him to repeatedly received the care of that

experienced police officer. He was also one of the few people who understood the typically misunderstood Kyousuke.

After taking a deep breath, just as Kyousuke was about to press the call button...

Dinnnnnnnng, donnnnnnnng.

Dinnnnnnnng, donnnnnnnng.

"Huh? Who could it be at this hour...? Did Mom and Dad send something by courier?"

Perhaps malfunctioning, the doorbell sounded off key.

In this very instant, a deep chill attacked Kyousuke's entire body. This was an unpleasant and extremely ominous premonition that was difficult to describe.

"Hold on, Ayaka!"

Kyousuke stopped the sister who was walking to the entrance.

"...I'll go. Stay here. Got that?"

"Onii-chan...? O-Okay... Ayaka understands."

Perhaps feeling Kyousuke's unusual attitude, Ayaka showed nervousness on her face. Kyousuke left his sister, rooted to the spot, and walked to the entrance. With every step, his terrible premonition increased in intensity.

Visiting Kyousuke's home at this time was very likely...

"A thousand apologies for this late night intrusion. You are Kamiya Kyousuke-kun, is that correct?"

The man in the black leather jacket--the detective--was standing at the entrance, followed by a subordinate.

He closed up his open notebook and cast his strict gaze towards Kyousuke.

Behind that polite behavior, he was giving off a great commanding presence from his entire body that his colleagues familiar to Kyousuke could not hope to compare.

Criminal investigations--A detective in charge of a homicide case. These were the eyes of a hunter in pursuit of prey.

Enduring the heavy weight of the man's gaze, Kyousuke was instantly overflowing with terrible premonitions.

Kyousuke mobilized his parched and sticky throat, managing to bring words together with great difficulty.

"Y-Yes... I am Kamiya Kyousuke..."

"May I take a little of your time right now?"

"Sure, yeah... No problem. I was just about to call you guys about the incident at the nearby empty warehouse..."

"Hmm... That's not necessary. Let's leave the specifics for when we get back to the station."

Saying that, the man took out handcuffs and cuffed Kyousuke's wrists.

--Kaching. A cold and hard sound.

"......What?"

Kyousuke could not understand at all what was done to him.

As though looking at filth, the gaze pierced Kyousuke straight through.

"E-Excuse me, officer? What on earth, is this a joke..."

"Kamiya Kyousuke."

Calling out his name, the man spoke.

As though trying to obliterate all the hard work, peace and happiness that Kyousuke had accumulated to this date...

With cold words of finality, proving there is no god in this world...

He declared:

"As the prime suspect for the homicide of twelve men, the incident taking place at a certain empty warehouse in Ootsuki City's eastern region, you are hereby arrested immediately without warrant."

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"...So here's the deal. At the Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation, the sixteen of you gathered here in Year 1 Class A, absolutely every one of you has killed more or less. Look around you. These classmates in your gaze are all kindred who has killed fellow humans just like you. Whether vicious or totally harmless in appearance, the same applies to all of you without exception. Kukuku... Please get along together well for the next three years."

Looking down at the students from the lectern, Kurumiya lectured.

She was still filled with commanding presence as usual. Listening to her mumbling and sweet lolita voice, Kyousuke clenched his fist tightly under the desk, trying desperately to suppress the urge to scream out.

(...Get along together well? Asking me to get along with these crazy people!? Stop screwing around!)

While the students eyed one another, Kyousuke looked down and trembled.

The thought of being in the same room with fifteen convicted murderers made him feel as though his brain was going mad from fright. --Correction, fourteen might be more accurate. Soaked in a blood bath, Mohican had already been carried out on a stretcher by what appeared to be a medical team, dressed in white coats.

That Mohican was probably a convicted murderer too. Fighting that kind of opponent, Kyousuke felt terrified in hindsight, especially unarmed. Were Kurumiya not around, the one being carried out on a stretcher could be Kyousuke instead. At a school gathering juvenile convicts--a place that felt like a juvenile reformatory--such ways of thinking were too naive after all.

As luck would have it, all students here were convicted murderers, totally unexpected.

(Shit... Absolutely shit, this school. None of these guys are to be messed with.)

This school filled with madmen was definitely no place for Kyousuke to stay.

Whether arrested as a murder suspect, judged guilty or forced to enroll in this place... Something must have gone wrong somewhere in this entire process, because he simply had not done the deed.

--That said, Kyousuke was completely helpless by this point.

Since enrolling here was reality, in Kurumiya or the other students' eyes, Kyousuke was a veritable murderer. In other words, kindred...

(This feels like a sheep thrown to the wolves...)

He felt that his situation would worsen if the fact that he was normal were exposed.

Perhaps mocked, perhaps abused--Worst of all, he might very well be killed.

(If I don't want to be exposed, then I'll have to pretend to be a murderer like them?)

Thinking that, Kyousuke suppressed his trembling body desperately, literally hanging on for dear life. Then...

"So, let's start with the self-introductions one by one, shall we? Name, age, kill count, killing method, motive etc... Well, just keep it simple. Three minutes each. Go according to student number. Also, if anyone lies, I'll beat them until they vomit blood."

Tapping the steel pipe lightly against the back of her head, Kurumiya left the lectern. At a distance within the reach of a casual swing of the deadly weapon, she gave off an intimidating aura of solemnity.

The pressure of those who were introducing themselves could very well be imagined.

Also, in Kyousuke's case, the most difficult problem was not that. Rather, it was the explanation about killing method and motive.

Because in reality, Kyousuke had not killed anyone and could only fabricate these details. Conversely, all the students listening to his self-introduction were all highly experienced murderers...

Just as Kyousuke was crushed with unease, wondering if he would be able to pull the wool over their eyes...

".....Yawn. What a pain."

Murmuring with a yawn, the girl sitting left of Kyousuke stood up.

She was student number one apparently. Putting her nail care kit on the table, she walked up to the lectern lethargically. Looking at this classmate again, Kyousuke found her to be an astounding beauty.

Pale skin that looked almost transparent. A straight bridge of the nose. Rust-red beautiful hair, slightly wavy, tied in a ponytail. Her rust-red irises were the same color as her hair while her eyelids were half closed. The long shadows of her lashes fell upon her lightly made up cheeks.

Her figure was tall and slim like a model's. Extending from beneath the miniskirt, her legs were as beautiful as polished ivory, combined with the thigh-high socks striped black and white, creating an absolute territory of extreme seduction.

"....."

With a totally different sense of nervousness from before, Kyousuke gulped hard.

Fortunate enough to be neighbors, perhaps talking a bit to her would be nice.

An insignificant thought of impureness. But as soon as he heard her self-introduction, Kyousuke's fantasies were shattered and dismembered.

"Akabane Eiri, age fifteen. Number of victims killed... Six."

The girl--Eiri--announced nonchalantly.

"...!?" The room instantly entered an uproar. Kurumiya went "Hoh?", impressed.

The number of kills uttered seemed to be shocking everyone present. This was only natural for no one could have expected such a frail and lovely looking girl to be a murderer who had unbelievably taken six lives...

"...Hah~ Lame."

On the other hand, she remained standing aloof, unconcerned with the mood in the classroom.

Her gaze did not leave her unfinished nails while she continued with a face of impatient annoyance:

"...Slit their throats with sharp implements, very ordinary. No particular motive. I did it, but can't remember. Because there's no need to remember... That's it? That's who I am, pleased to meet everyone."

Finally ending with a yawn, Eiri descended from the lectern.

Kyousuke thought to himself: absolutely do not get involved with this girl for sure.

(What the fuck... This chick is totally trouble. Her looks really deceived me.)

Glancing sideways at Eiri who had returned to her seat to continue working on her nails, Kyousuke could feel his cold sweat exploding out.

Patting his face, he reset his thinking. His relaxed consciousness grew tense again.

(All classmates are convicted murderers, no matter how harmless they look from a glance...)

"...Hey, next one. What are you doing? Come to the lectern decisively! Or do you need some disciplining!?"

At this moment, Kurumiya's voice, filled with anger, shook the air in the classroom.

From the seat to the left and behind of Kyousuke, a sound of someone getting up frantically was heard.

"Eeeek!? S-S-S-S-S-Sowwee! Awawa."

Next came the pattering sound of indoor shoes, walking past Kyousuke.

"I-I'm really so sorry... S-S-S-S-S-Spacing out so! Awawawawa."

--A petite girl with short chestnut-brown hair. A stammering voice and an appearance reminding one of a small animal. Looking very timid, she seemed quite shaken by Kurumiya's shout of anger.

Almost falling over several times, she desperately went up to the lectern.

Tears glimmered and slid left and right in her flaxen-colored eyes, displaying great unease.

"U-Umm... U-Uhhh... Ooh.... I am so terribly sorry for being born!"

She kept apologizing. --Crash! Her forehead struck the lectern.

The classroom returned to silence like the surface of water after a storm.

Keeping her forehead still on the lectern, the girl remained still. Finally...

"Sniff... Sniff... Sniff sniff sniff..."

The girl's stiffened body was twitching slightly.

She's gonna cry--Just as Kyousuke thought that, Kurumiya lifted up the steel pipe.

"Just try crying out. I'll smash your skull, capish?"

A completely expressionless threat. the voice was deep and parched.

The girl's trembling body suddenly bounced up greatly. Looking up with her trembling face...

"I couldn't hold it back... and cried... Sorry-- ...Sniff."

She said tearfully.

".....Hoo."

Kurumiya's face twitched once as though convulsing.

Oh man, it's over--Kyousuke thought. Probably everyone thought the same.

The girl wailed "eeeeeek!?" and clutched her head, closing her eyes in resignation.

"Hoo... I got it. In that case, it can't be helped, right?"

With a sigh, the steel pipe was swung down.

A skull shattering strike howled as it tore through the air.

"--Continue with the self-introduction. You still have a minute and forty-six seconds."

The pipe's front end had stopped mere millimeters from the tiny hands the girl was using to shield her head.

"......Ooh?"

The girl opened her eyes slightly.

At this time, Kurumiya had already placed the steel pipe back on her shoulder and taken half a step back.

Towards the girl whose eyes were out of focus, the lolita voice threatened in a tone like a sharpened dagger:

"Hey what are you doing? Continue the self-intro. No matter how small you are, I'm not gonna hold back next time."

Kyousuke racked his brain for a reason why Kurumiya would spare her. Presumably she felt a sense of kinship with another loli like her.

"Eh? Ah... Y-Yes!?"

Accepting Kurumiya's final warning, the girl bowed as though almost falling over.

Her voice became exceptionally fluent and she spoke voluminously all at once.

"Igarashi Maina, fourteen years old! I love eating soft things, mushy things and sweet things. Things I hate to eat are hard things, sticky things and bitter things--No wait!? Let me think, umm... I r-remember now! Kill count! The number of people I've killed is..."

The girl's--Maina's--eyes were filled with tears again.

Biting her lip, she continued in a trembling voice:

"...Three. But that was an accident... It's my fault for being too clumsy. It's all my fault that everyone... Sob sob sob. I didn't wanna kill everyone... Sniff. Sob... Sorry. Apologizing all the time, I'm so sorry. I am unworthy, please to meek you... Oh no, I bit my tongue. I bit my tongue because I bit my tongue! Oww oww."

Ending with tongue biting, Maina took a bow and returned helplessly to her seat.

Moistened with tears, her face was filled with deep guilt.

Before she sat down, Kyousuke felt much relieved after seeing the crying Maina.

(So someone normal looking does exist! Although convicted of murder, she's not a genuine murderer...)

Due to the shock from the first person was too great, even though Kyousuke was convinced that only abnormal people committed murders, but upon further thought, those who killed people willingly were a rare minority after all.

Maina had called it an "accident." It was not because she wanted to kill.

Having killed contrary to her own wishes, weighed down heavily by her guilt and trembling, she looked like an extremely ordinary girl. Even under such abnormal circumstances.

(Igarashi-san must be very unsettled, thrown into a place like this... I've decided!)

--I'll talk and get acquainted with her as soon as possible.

Then if there were other normal people, they could form their own circle to resist dangerous characters like Eiri. Kyousuke decided that was the plan.

"...Okay, next. There are still thirteen more of you. Hurry up chop chop!"

Hearing Kurumiya's voice urging them to continue, Kyousuke felt relieved and relaxed some of the force in his tense shoulders.

Although he still had no idea how the future would unfold--Bridges will naturally be crossed when encountered.

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...Somehow it felt like he was still on the edge of a cliff.

After Maina's self-introduction, the next two classmates were abnormal enough to totally shatter the sense of relief Kyousuke felt earlier. These guys gave the impression that they could go off and murder someone any time.

First was a hunched over, short boy giving off a gloomy aura--Usami Kagerou.

Due to his long bangs almost covering his face completely and his almost inaudible voice, it was impossible to tell what he was saying or thinking.

All Kyousuke barely managed to hear was that he had murdered one person as well as mentioning inexplicable names like Jeffrey Dahmer and Ed Gein... Are those the names of movie actors?

Due to the unknown horrifying aura exuded by this guy, Kyousuke wanted to have as little to do with him as possible.

Next was the second person. Calling himself Oonogi Arata, the boy was extremely striking in appearance, sporting dreadlocks, sunglasses and tanned skin. "Idiot couples flaunting public displays of affection deserve to be cut up with knives", he said.

Throughout the entire process, he was scowling in an utterly fearless manner. Feel not a shred of remorse from him, Kyousuke decided to stay as far away from him as possible too. Then finally, the third person...

"Next, the guy in the front row. Come on up."

"...Yes."

It was Kyousuke's turn. Gulping, he stood up.

Clenching his sweaty fist, he suppressed the shaking in his entire body and walked to the lectern.

Probably built to order for Kurumiya's height, the lectern was super short. Standing in front of this kind of lectern, Kyousuke took a deep breath.

Then resolving himself, he looked up.

"...!?"

Instantly, flying into view, the scene was even more intimidating than he imagined.

Inside the devastated classroom, all covered in graffiti, were unusual students arranged in a four by four array. Even for Kyousuke who was used to dealing with delinquents and punks, he was feeling a sense of pressure that made it difficult to stand straight.

(Hmm... W-What's with these guys? There's no one respectable at all?)

The murderers' exceptionally calm gazes were gathered upon him.

...So scary. It's no joke, this is really scary.

But even so, he could not back down now.

How can I lose to these bastard, how can I lose to these murderers!? —Kyousuke incited himself.

Kyousuke's brow tensed then he glared derisively straight back at his classmates.

"...Kamiya Kyousuke. Age 15. The number I've killed is tw..."

Saying that, Kyousuke noticed.

It was definitely not good to confess that he had not killed anyone, but candidly revealing the framed crime was a no go either. After all, the number Kyousuke had killed was...

...Yeah, it's really no good. Call it indisputable and excessively flawless.

As the saying goes, the nail that sticks out gets hammered in. Being too high profile would not be wise.

"Eh... The number of people I've killed is one. No murder weapon, I killed the victim with my bare hands..."

"Liar. Didn't you kill twelve, Kamiya you brat? Great murderer who has racked up the highest kill count in the class, why so modest? Kukuku..."

"Eh."

The lie was instantly exposed. Furthermore, unnecessary information was added.

He looked at Kurumiya. She was laughing.

With an expression fully conveying her sadistic nature, she snickered in amusement.

(I have the highest kill count? In other words, among convicted murderers... I-I'm number one!?)

Noticing Kyousuke's face gradually turn pale, Kurumiya seemed to be throwing salt on Kyousuke's wounds.

Deliberately sweeping her gaze across the entire class, as though publicizing strongly, she said:

"Locking twelve men in a warehouse, using metal bats, chains, concrete blocks and all sorts of blunt instruments, you massacred them in flashy manner, didn't you? Although I've seen all sorts of murderers before, to this date, it's still hard to imagine a murdering bastard like you coming from Japan. Simply from the number of kills, you're already top five for all time. In terms of kills in a single incident, you're only inferior to the Tsuyama Massacre of Thirty, ranking you second for now. Also, without using any firearms, you only used blunt weapons to murder. Also, you're still a minor! This can be called a mass murderer's masterpiece... Are you trying to play the role of a harmless sheep to deceive me and the classmates? But too bad. I shall straighten out your depraved and devious nature, rendering you unrecognizable in the process, prepare yourself, got that!?"

Oh man, this is the end... A perfect end.

Vacantly at a loss, Kyousuke could hear the voices of the classmates.

"What a crazy guy, Kamiya Kyousuke... He's really something! I can't believe it's double digits, that's terrible, right!?"

"Massacring twelve people at once? Is his brain normal? So scary. Fufufu."

"H-Heehee... The spurting fluids, splattering brains, death screams... H-Heeheehee."

"Ooh... So scary... So scary... Save me, papa... mama... Wahhh... Sob."

Fear, surprise, admiration, etc, there were even incomprehensible mutterings.

--As expected of a classroom where madmen were gathered.

The majority of students were not in fear but curiosity.

From their gazes focused on Kyousuke, that was the deep impression transmitted.

A poor image completely entrenched. Troublesome beyond measure.

That said, trying to reverse this situation was totally impossible by Kyousuke's lone efforts.

(Oh shit... This sucks. I'll get hassled... After this, I'll definitely get hassled...)

Slumping his shoulders, head down, Kyousuke returned to his seat with a heavy heart.

At this moment, he felt someone's piercing stare and looked to the side.

"...Hmm?"

The beauty who claimed to have killed six--Eiri--stopped the movements of her hands and scrutinized Kyousuke with sharp eyes.

However, she immediately averted her gaze and buried herself in her nail art.

"..."

--Absolute worst of the worst.

Kyousuke did not know if it was curiosity or jealousy but she definitely harbored subtle enmity. Her sleeping eyes awakened only in the instant she was staring at Kyousuke.

Eiri's rust-red eyes were just like her name[2], akin to sharp instruments.

Kyousuke instantly felt his back tremble in terror. For a second, it felt like there was a knife pressed against his throat.

(Shit man... This is totally terrible! And I can feel all sorts of different gazes...)

--In this harsh environment, how long can I actually survive?

As the self-introductions continued, this despairing question suddenly flashed across Kyousuke's mind.

"Nice to meet you, everyone. I am Japan's homegrown Ted Bundy, Saotome Shinji. Fufu... May I ask if anyone knows Ted Bundy? Do note it's Bundy, not panties, okay? A rare American strangler and my most revered serial killer. I'm nowhere near his great feat of thirty kills... Just two, and both of them girls. I did them after strangling them with my bare hands. That feeling from my fingers, and that last moan on their last breath, absolutely wonderful. Of course, what came after that was also... Fufufu. Let's be frank here, I'm a necrophiliac. I love killing ladies who look like pretty dolls. Especially ones like Akabane Eiri who was up here earlier! --Ah, also, Kamiya Kyousuke-san. I am sincerely filled with respect for your accomplishments in murder, you know? Let's be friends from now on."

The handsome youth with the light brown hair winked.

He seemed to give off an aura of gentleness at a glance but this actually added to the unnecessary unpleasantness. Just from this guy's self-introduction, it was obvious he said the wrong thing. Kyousuke could hear a tongue clicking from the desk neighboring his left.

Finding another tough customer standing in front of him, Kyousuke lamented his situation.

(There must be mistake somewhere before this... Gimme a break.)

--After the titles of Slayer and Megadeath, now came the Mass Murderer of Twelve.

To think that this unjust conviction only attracted abnormal murderers that mere punks and ruffians cannot compare to.

Kyousuke could not help but feel an urge to lament his fate as soon as he imagined the hardships ahead of him.

(Is there nothing more to my life than this injustice...? T-That's way too sad.)

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"...Now then. Everyone has introduced themselves, right? Then it's time for lessons, although one stupid swine is absent... If he's still alive, he should be back in a while."

As though taking her turn at the lectern after the boy who came down, Kurumiya went up again.

Instantly, the atmosphere filling the classroom seemed to grow heavy.

While tapping the steel pipe lightly on her shoulder, she looked down at her students, the convicted murderers, and smiled lightly.

Her large round eyes did not show any fear or wavering.

Residing in them was only a sense of superiority and mocking attitude supported by overwhelming confidence and unshakable composure.

Despite looking like an elementary schooler, this teacher was probably impossible to kill even if the entire group of students banded together to assault her--

Commanding an intimidating presence that caused the viewer to be certain of this fact was precisely Kurumiya.

"Kukuku... How do you feel after the self-introductions? You feel like you're just a bunch of incurable bastards, right? --Of course. That's the kind of place this is. Society's trash dump where human scum like you are gathered. A trash can. A shelter. A lair where inhuman fiends reside... Hear that?"

Unfortunately, Kurumiya was extremely correct--Kyousuke believed so.

Because within the class, he could not find another person who gave off an impression of accidental manslaughter like Maina's. Also, the majority of students had either killed voluntarily or believed killing was nothing special... During the self-introductions, Kyousuke was completely unable to control his cold sweat and trembling from revulsion.

(Living my school life with these kinds of people? No way. Because to me...)

Neither their thought processes nor beliefs, none of that could be understood.

This was an abnormal school where abnormal students were gathered. Hence...

"Is this place hell? No, it's purgatory. This is purgatory for cleansing, incinerating you who have been tainted by sin. It is our responsibility as teachers to correct and straighten out the ugly and twisted natures of convicted murderers like you, to allow you to be reborn, nice and clean. For this purpose, I will use all means necessary. All means, you got that? ...Kukuku."

Ruling over all such abnormality was the abnormal teacher--Kurumiya Hijiri.

Kyousuke realized once again that this shorty demon of a teacher was impossible to oppose.

While he was thinking this, an angry voice was projected in his face.

"Especially you! That's you, Kamiya! You're covered all over in filth, more filthy than anyone. I will clean you up, inside and out, look forward to it! You mass murderer of twelve, allow me to take care of you with twelve times the loving for bastards who only have a single victim under their belt... That is, if you're not dead or insane by then."

"...Ha... Haha, ha..."

In this kind of situation, all Kyousuke could do was force a laugh.

In front of these classmates and under this teacher's gaze...

"Hey, what are you laughing at, brat? Do you need discipline that much? HUH!?"

"Eh!? N-No! It's not like that, please hold on... Please put the steel pipe away and don't poke me in the face with it. I'm very sorry. I really very sorry! I won't oppose you, please forgive me!"

--Previous assertion withdrawn. This was a situation where even laughing was not allowed.

Scoffing "hmph" at Kyousuke who was kneeling in prostration, Kurumiya put away the steel pipe.

"...Very well. Continue to play your little deception, brat. How long can your facade last? Do your best... Oh right, of course it goes the same for you lot, convicted murderers! As long as I'm still here as the homeroom teacher, I will make you all submit without exception under pain and terror! Trampling you utterly, I shall tell you what endless despair means! Don't even think about human rights or whatever, do you understand, stupid swine!?"

In addition to making threats, Kurumiya smacked her palm against the blackboard.

Intimidated by this pressure, the convicted murderers, students, returned to silence.

The speaker near the ceiling began to vibrate and the hoarse bell's ringing was heard.

"...Hmm? Time's up already?"

Frowning from the ear-splitting tone, Kurumiya glanced at her watch.

The watch face was entrenched in a dark, metallic, heavy watch, a watch of unrefined rugged construction.

"Okay. Break time is up. Next period starts ten minutes later. Return to your seats before second period begins. Or else, it'll be discipline time, yes? Kukuku..."

Laughing in a manner highly incongruent with that adorable face, Kurumiya threatened.

Whether her personality, tone of voice, attire or her watch, Kurumiya's grade schooler appearance was a complete mismatch. But the worst match of all turned out to be that ominous smiling face of hers--

Kyousuke realized painfully.

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"...Wait up."

After Kurumiya left the classroom, Kyousuke was just about to get up and leave the room, intending to stretch his legs, when his left neighbor suddenly called out to stop him. The girl's voice was inorganic and cold, akin to a bladed instrument.

Kyousuke mechanically sat properly again, turning his gaze in trepidation.

"...What's the matter, Akabane Eiri-san?"

"Just Eiri is fine. --Say, is it really true that you killed twelve people?"

Without warning, a super fastball of a direct question. Although her face was directed towards her nails, Eiri's sharp and half-closed eyes had Kyousuke firmly in her sights. Rather than questioning, it felt more like interrogation.

"Ah, no... T-That..."

Just as Kyousuke was about to run away from the rust-red eyes that were glued to him, his eyes starting to wander...

"Excuse me. If it's alright with you, may I join in? Although I was intending to come over to chat during lunch, I can't let someone steal a march on me... Fufu."

A cheerful and friendly voice. Kyousuke looked back to see a gentle handsome youth with light-brown hair, smiling cordioally, standing in front Kyousuke.

"A pleasure to meet you both. I am Saotome Shinji, the strangler. How fortunate I am to be learning in the same classroom as two outstanding murderers like you, what a great honor. Let's get along well."

"Sure... Ah, same here. Pleased to meet you... Yeah?"

Despite feeling apprehensive about the friendly hand extended towards him, Kyousuke still made an accommodating smile and shook it.

--Instantly, an unusual sense of cold passed to his hand, a deathly chill akin to having countless insects crawling all over his body. In actual fact, Shinji had used this hand to strangle two girls to death.

"Fufufu. Much appreciated, Kamiya-san. Eiri-san too--"

"Can you put that filthy hand away?"

Eiri's acrid words rejected the extended friendly hand.

"...What?"

Faced with Eiri's attitude that was not quite appropriate for a first meeting, Shinji's smile was showing cracks.

Even so, Shinji readjusted his mood, scratched his face and smiled wryly.

"Fufu... Oh my, very filthy huh. That's really quite harsh! Although it's common knowledge that I'm a sadist, it seems like my masochistic side is awakening--"

"Didn't you hear me? If you don't withdraw your hand, I'll chop it off."

"----"

Eyes still on her own nails, Eiri threatened violently. Shinji's expression disappeared from his face.

Slowly putting down the hand seeking a handshake, he began to grin in a terrifying manner.

"I see I see... Interesting. I don't actually dislike girls like you, you know? This is making me feel more and more like killing you then doing the corpse... Please allow me to build up further feelings between us, okay?"

Muttering in joy, Shinji shifted his gaze to Eiri's crossed legs.

His sticky ogling crawled all over the pair of gorgeous legs extending out from under the miniskirt.

"...Really. Whatever, just disappear from sight, okay? You're annoying."

As though deliberately inciting this Shinji, Eiri deliberately crossed her legs the other way and answered.

Yawning, she deliberately rubbed her eyes as a show for Shinji.

"..."

In response, Shinji simply narrowed his eyes slightly.

Without saying anything, taking his eyes off Eiri's legs, he looked at Kyousuke and shrugged.

"Looks like I'm being a third wheel, so I'll exit stage quietly this time. Please enjoy yourselves. Fufufu. Goodbye, Kamiya-san... and Eiri-san."

Patting Kyousuke on the shoulder and giving Eiri a glance, Shinji took off leisurely.

--Throughout the entire process, there was no smiling in his eyes. Kyousuke really wanted to convince himself he was imagining things.

"...That guy is so annoying. He'd better go and die."

Glaring at Shinji's back as he left the classroom, Eiri cursed.

Surprised and intimidated, Kyousuke looked to his classmate and neighbor on the right.

"Hey hey, telling someone to die isn't really nice, Akabane-san..."

"Just Eiri is fine."

"...I-I see. Sorry. So, Eiri-san--"

"Just Eiri is fine, do I need to repeat myself?"

A sideways glare from her was truly frightening.

No matter how Kyousuke thought, simply the matter of being addressed could not possibly be a real reason for getting angry.

But she was the murderer of six people. If something so small incurred her displeasure, it was truly nerve-wracking.

"Oh... Eh, Eiri? Somehow that doesn't... feel right. --Don't you think?"

"...Huh? What did you say? What's not right?"

"Yeah. Well, could you put away those narrowed eyes, gazing like knives? Just talk normally to me directly... Correction, please talk normally to me directly. Stop glaring at me!"

--Why is she glaring at me from all sorts of angles? Kyousuke was so scared that he almost forgot to use polite language.

"...Tsk." Eiri clicked her tongue in displeasure.

"...What the heck? Are you picking a fight?"

"Eh? A fight whatever, that's totally absurd... Besides, the one picking a fight first is you! Why do you have to speak so offensively!? It's the same with Shinji just now, if you don't change your attitude--"

"...Huh? Can you stop nagging me?"

The destructive power of Eiri's gaze instantly multiplied.

Her half-opened eyes were now 70% open.

The sharpness of her gaze was now like an unsheathed Japanese sword.

"Eh!? No, I just think speaking that way is going a bit far, uh..."

"Didn't you listen to his self-introduction? That guy is a necrophiliac who specifically targets girls to murder, you know? How could there possibly be a girl who wants to have friendly dealings with that thing?"

"...Well, you have a point there."

--Say, haven't you killed six people already? Kyousuke swallowed the words that were stuck in his throat.

As a side note, Eiri's kill count of six was only second to Kyousuke's twelve.

In other words, Eiri was actually the one with the most kills in the class.

At this moment, Kyousuke asked in order to drive away his surging fright:

"Say, it's been nagging at me... What is a necrophiliac?"

"...Hmph. That's not something you should ask me."

Eiri made an annoyed expression. Holding her forehead, she crossed her legs the other way again.

Sitting almost near the edge of her chair, Eiri's skirt was also so short that one could not help but wonder 'is there any point in dressing like this?' Right now, various things were flashing in and out of sight. No wait, it would be better to say that it was perfectly clear in view.

(To think it's... black-striped panties? Even the girls' underwear are specified by the school!? Say, she really does have a beautiful pair of legs... Hey, I shouldn't be staring, right!?)

Kyousuke frantically turned his face away. Then Eiri exhaled as though a little exasperated.

"Intercourse with corpses. Or, loving corpses. In other words, a fetish where anything not a corpse won't do."

"...Won't do? What do you mean by won't do?"

"Hmm? ...W-Why are you asking me this kind of question!? Don't intentionally make me say it!"

Eiri glared at Kyousuke and roared. Her sleepy-looking eyes were almost 90% open.

Perhaps it was his imagination at work, but her facial complexion looked red. --To be honest, this reaction was quite unexpected.

Kyousuke was thinking she would answer calmly and unfazed like before...

Perhaps in contrast to her glamorous appearance and offensive personality, her inner self was surprisingly pure.

"S-Sorry... I get it. In that case, it can't be helped. Sorry for annoying you."

"...Hmph? I know right? Now that you know, very well."

Eiri looked to the side again. Looking at the side of her face, Kyousuke asked:

"But going at it this way, aren't you attracting unnecessary discomfort? I can't believe you're making enemies of someone so dangerous."

"...It's nothing. If he tries to kill me, I'll just kill him back."

Eiri's expression remained unchanged as she declared firmly.

"...Eiri-san, you're so bold."

As expected of the murderer standing at the pinnacle of the entire class. Her confidence was directed in a completely wrong direction. Kyousuke absolutely did not want to be enemies with her.

"...Basically, there's still that shorty here, right? If anyone makes a reckless move to kill me, before I can kill them back, the steel pipe will probably have sent them off to the next life already. Like today with Mohican."

"That's definitely true..."

I beg you, please don't say words like 'shorty' when she's around in person, okay?

It was very well for guys like Mohican to get smashed to a pulp. But if a girl like Eiri were to be smashed--even though she is a murderer of six--Kyousuke still had no wish to see such a sight.

After Kyousuke conveyed these thoughts honestly to her, Eiri's face relaxed slightly.

"How stupid. Who would say that in front of her? Don't lump me with those single-celled organisms. I'm not a rabid dog who'll bite everyone indiscriminately. I do pick my opponents... Of course, the same goes for murderers."

Her final words became quieter and quieter, almost disappearing.

Kyousuke was just about to ask when Shinji returned from outside the classroom and walked over.

"...Tsk. Why is that guy coming?"

Eiri clicked her tongue in displeasure and continued working on her nail art.

After painting her fingernails pure red, she used tweezers to place rhinestones on them one by one.

--Speaking of which, she had been doing this in class too, but the teacher did not call her out on that.

"I have returned, Kamiya-san. How are things progressing with Eiri-san?"

"...Progressing? No, it's just ordinary chatting."

Working up to holding hands or kissing within break time would be most surprising indeed.

Kyousuke could feel Eiri glancing over in his direction while doing her nails.

Like a theater performer, Shinji looked up at the sky and said:

"Oh my... This won't do at all, Kamiya-san! After the first encounter, you must conquer a girl within five minutes! Although it's essentially impossible to do in this class... Hmm, I have messed up in my self-introduction. Although Class B still doesn't know about my background, I tried going

over to present myself... But it's no good. Class B doesn't have any decent chicks! There's a giant girl who's abnormal whether vertically or horizontally and a weird girl who wears a black gas mask. They're like special decorations for contrasting with our class... Sigh."

"I-I see... That's pretty proactive of you."

Other classes did exist, as was logical. Man, a gas mask or whatever, that's way too much freedom...

Kyousuke wished from the bottom of his heart against getting involved with any of these fellows.

"Okay, is everyone seated? Those who are not ready will be shredded and fed to dogs."

A moment later, the bell rang just as Shinji took his seat. At the same time, Kurumiya entered the classroom, holding a large pile of printouts in her hands. Kyousuke hastily straightened his sitting posture.

"...So sleepy."

On the other hand, Eiri remained the same as always even after Kurumiya returned, acting her usual self.

(Akabane Eiri, huh... Although she seems a lot more respectable than imagined...)

I knew it, still, I'd better try my best not to get involved.

If only she won't come talk to me again--Kyousuke thought.

× × ×

"...Hey, Kyousuke."

The bell rang for the end of the period. Just as Kyousuke finished organizing the handed out printouts, Eiri swiftly came over to strike up conversation. While putting her nail care tools into her makeup box, she asked:

"...What are your plans for lunch?"

"Hmm? Uh, lunch huh. Lemme think..."

Asked so suddenly, Kyousuke was at a loss. The next hour was the lunch break.

After the introductions to the school conditions lasting from the first to the third period, Kyousuke had come to understand that this Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation was more ordinary than imagined.

Lessons were distributed over the usual curriculum. Each period lasted sixty minutes. Every day had five periods. Ten subjects in total: Japanese, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Music, Art, Physical and Health Education, Home Economics, English... and Ethics.

Apart from the 'penal labor' that was compulsory every morning and evening, the timetable was the same as Kyousuke's high school. Homework, labs, supplementary lessons and makeup exams all definitely existed.

Same for the facilities. Apart from the interior decor and a series of special classrooms including the Punishment Room, everything was very normal. Although leaving the school grounds was virtually impossible, the fact that freedom of movement within the school was allowed turned out to have its conveniences.

For example, students were allowed to go to the cafeteria or the snack shop to get food during the lunch break. Hence, judging from the earlier behavior, Eiri intended to go for lunch together with Kyousuke.

No boy would be unhappy to receive an invitation from a beauty like Eiri. That said...

(Although she's a hottie, this chick is a murderer standing at the top of this class... A real and authentic murderer.)

What was attracting Eiri was probably his kill count of twelve.

Kyousuke had simply been framed and actually killed no one. But if this fact was exposed, her attitude might make a massive hundred and eighty degree turn. In the worst case, he might end up killed on the spot--Kyousuke could imagine this kind of tragic prediction.

Thinking that, trying to hang out unnecessarily would be no different from suicidal behavior.

After all, the more time they spent together, the easier it would be for the truth to slip out.

"...Hey Kyousuke, hurry up. There's only an hour."

"Oh sorry... I'm not really hungry. I just plan on killing time randomly somewhere."

"...I see. Oh well, whatever. I was just asking. Then be on your way."

Throwing down the nail care tools she was in the middle of organizing, Eiri suddenly turned her face away.

Seeing her pouting face, Kyousuke wondered if he had put her in a bad mood.

If so, that was bad, I'd better escape ASAP--in a panic, Kyousuke suddenly got up from his seat.

But there was one last thing. A warning.

"Then I'm going. By the way, that guy..."

"That guy? Oh... It's nothing. If he dares to come, I'll just wreck him instead."

"...I guess. But still, take care, okay?"

Kyousuke was worrying about Shinji's movements.

Shinji was currently by the wall at the back of the classroom with two other boys.

Usami and Oonogi--The hunchback gloomy boy and the tanned guy with the dreadlocks.

They were chatting amiably, glancing covetously over in Eiri's general direction from time to time.

In this kind of situation, thoughts of acting like a man and refusing to flee while leaving Eiri alone were losing out against notions of being an ordinary citizen unwilling to get involved in the conflicts between murderers. Even if it meant being labelled a coward or chicken shit.

Scary things were scary. Kyousuke only wanted to leave as quickly as possible.

"S-So... See you later?"

"...Yeah yeah yeah. Later."

Eiri replied curtly. Kyousuke waved to Shinji as well just to go through the motions and left the classroom.

Shinji smiled radiantly and waved back. --He did not chase after Kyousuke.

(Okay... I managed to flee safely.)

Although it was a relief, it was too early to lower his guard completely.

Like the classrooms, the corridors also had their walls covered with graffiti and the windows were fitted with metal bars.

Walking along the corridor where uniformed convicted murderers were passing through, Kyousuke walked with his head up in order not to be underestimated or looked down by others.

(Say, are all these people really murderers? S-So scary...)

Trying his hardest to avoid eye contact but hiding the fear in his heart, Kyousuke ran like lightning.

The facilities of the Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation consisted of two four-story blocks of the new school building and one block of the old school building, a total of three blocks of classrooms. The old school building was located not far away and was quite rundown and broken.

Kyousuke and the rest of the first-years' area of activity was precisely confined to this old school building.

The classroom was in the second floor. The first floor had the infirmary, snack shop and other facilities. The cafeteria was also separate from the second and third year students, located on the first floor of the same building. Apart from facilities like the gym and the martial arts training halls, the first-years were totally segregated. In fact, Kyousuke still had not seen any upperclassmen students yet.

--The reason could basically be guessed.

The Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation was a school for convicted murderers to be reformed and reborn. Hence, new students who had not been enrolled for long would still be unreformed to a certain extent and quite dangerous.

Letting these guys make contact with the reformed upperclassmen would probably be worse than simply lighting up the embers of trouble, even

going as far as to cause bad influence. Hence, stinking fellows had to be treated poorly and segregated.

As a result, Kyousuke's current location had turned into a terrifying lair of demons...

(Geh!? What the heck, that girl just now... I almost mistook her for Bob Sapp! That's so intimidating no matter vertically or horizontally... Say, that boy is scary too! All covered in tattoos, his skin has turned green!?)

Looks like the other class--Year 1 Class B--was also filled with crazy characters. Whether due to a biased perspective or mistaken imagination, Kyousuke did not spot a single respectable person.

I'd better rush past before I get hassled--Thinking that, Kyousuke sped up.

--Patter patter patter patter patter patter patter!

(...Hmm? What's going on?)

Noisy footsteps were approaching from behind.

(What the heck, this sound... Am I being chased!?)

Kyousuke turned around like bouncing back. Entering his view was a girl with short, chestnut-brown hair, running at full speed--Igarashi Maina--throwing herself at him.

Eyes shut tightly, Maina was crying a storm.

"Wahhhhhhhhhhhhh! I can't stand this, can't stand this anymooooooooooooooorrree! I wanna go home--kyahhhhhhhh!?"

In the next instant, she tripped herself and fell. Standing close by, Kyousuke panicked and just as he was about to dodge decisively...

"Wait... Uwahhhhhhhh!?"

Getting him caught up without giving him any time to react, Maina crashed into his chest.

"O-Owwww... You're... Igarashi-san... Right?"

Grimacing in pain, Kyousuke looked around to see...

"...Oh."

Roughly one meter away, he saw something black. The girl who had collided with Kyousuke head on--Maina--was lying sprawled in the corridor.

Although her skirt was flipped up and her panties totally exposed, that was not surprising at all.

Not knowing what had happened, the surrounding students began to make a clamor. Even so, Maina still did not move.

Her slender arms and legs were spread out, like performing jumping jacks, while her panties remained exposed to public view.

"--Huh!? This is no time to be spacing out! Are you okay!?"

Quickly regaining his senses, Kyousuke hurried over to Maina's side to check if she was okay.

At the same time, he took the opportunity to straighten out her skirt.

"...Ooh."

Maina's body, frozen all this time, suddenly shook.

She looked alive. Kyousuke breathed a sigh of relief.

--However.

"Ooooh... Uwah.... Uwahhhhhhhhhh..."

Maina's face remained against the floor of the corridor while her body trembled slightly.

Feeling pity for her, Kyousuke scratched the back of his head.

"Uh... Where does it hurt? If it's painful, let me take you to the infirmary. Can you stand up? Or how about I support you?"

Putting his hand on her shoulder, he called to her. Maina's frightened body tensed.

"Eh!? ...Ooh? Ah... Sowwee. It's fine now... Sniff."

But perhaps noticing that Kyousuke was not hostile, Maina sniffed to draw back her nasal mucus, frantically wiped her tears away and slowly got up.

Although she was not hurt, her expression looked quite haggard.

"...Speaking of which, what happened? Did those people in the class do something to you?"

"Eh? U-Umm... That girl who killed six people suddenly said to me... 'Want to have lunch together?' But but her eyes were so sharp, so very scary... I reflexively said 'sorry' then her eyes got even sharper.. I thought I was gonna get killed, so--"

"...So you ran away. I see."

Kyousuke smiled wryly and nodded. He could totally empathize with Maina's feelings.

A murderer of six--Eiri--with a terrible gaze. Amplified by her notorious title, glared at by those rust-red eyes, it felt as though a knife, dripping with blood, was pointed at the viewer.

Wanting to escape was totally understandable... Also, Kyousuke himself had fled as well.

Maina took out a pastel colored handkerchief, wiping away the tears from her wet face.

"Sob sob... I don't know what to do... Everyone around me seems so scary. I didn't want to come to this kind of place, but why... Sob sob sob. So terrible... Too terrible... Uwah... Sniff... (blowing her nose)"

"Sigh, this kind of feeling... It's the same for me."

"...Eh?"

Looking up from the handkerchief, Maina's watery eyes looked at Kyousuke.

Kyousuke placed his hand on the respectable classmate whom he had finally managed to encounter after such difficulty and said firmly:

"It's the same for me, Igarashi-san... I didn't come here because I wanted to! Surrounded by psychotic murderers, I'm at a total loss too... But you're different, Igarashi-san! Like me, you're an ordinary person. In other words, we're comrades! Companions!"

--Right? Kyousuke picked up Maina's hand to seek agreement and smiled.

"Th-That's right! We're companions! Finally... Finally a normal person! Thank goodness... Truly thank goodness... Ooh... Uwahhhhhh."

Maina seemed to be so touched that tears of joy were streaming down.

Kyousuke could not help but perform a vigorous victory pose in his heart.

(Wonderful!!! I've finally made a respectable friend!)

Suppressing his urge to dance with joy, Kyousuke carefully put up a sincere and honest attitude.

"Haha. Oh well, wipe your tears away now. Otherwise, you'd look like a panda, you know?"

"...Ooh? Ah, jeez. Sob... I'll wipe now! Ehehe."

Kyousuke released her hand that he was holding. Maina started wiping the corners of her eyes with her handkerchief.

Kyousuke got an impression like watching a small animal wash its face, feeling like his very soul was being healed.

Upon closer examination, Maina was actually very cute, causing Kyousuke to gradually feel proud. Her round face also looked very soft.

"Okay! After wiping away your tears, let's go for lunch together! Would you like to go to the cafeteria or the snack shop, Maina? ...Oh sorry. I called your name directly without thinking... Oh, but you can call me 'Kyousuke' very normally, y'know? It might sound weird for me to say this, Maina, but you're really very adorable! It feels like... there's something like an urge to protect you? Like wanting to spoil you without letting go. If it's alright with you, let's get along..."

"Heeeeeeeeeeeeee!? K-K-K-Ka... Kami... Kamiya Kyouchyukee!? Heeee!? Aheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!?"

"Eh?"

Maina swiftly backed away and pointed at Kyousuke with a trembling finger.

After wiping her tears away, Maina's blurry vision had returned to normal.

Then after learning he was Kyousuke, Maina's frightened reaction could not possibly described in a few sentences.

"Heeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!? D-D-D-D-D-Don't kill me... Please don't kill me!! I beg you! I'll listen no matter what your demands! But please don't kill me! Really, don't kill me! ...Sob sob sob sob."

Maina was lying on the linoleum floor, clutching her head, curling into a ball.

Kyousuke hurried over to her side and tried his best to speak in a gentle voice:

"Oh, that's not right... I have no intention of killing you, so calm down. --Okay? I said just now, I'm the same as you, Maina, I've suffered a lot of injustice and it's not like I'm here because I want to. Right? --You understand, right?"

"Ah, yes. Surely, you don't want to be here because you haven't killed enough, right?"

"Y-Yeah, so true so true! Killing twelve the first time, maybe I can kill more next time? But despite that, I got caught, what a shame. So frustrating. I still haven't killed enough... Yeah right, that's totally wroooooooooooooooooong!"

"Heeeeeeeeeeeeeee!? You peeled off your facade!!!!!!!!!!?"

"It's not a facade, I was just making a sarcastic retort! Besides, to begin with--"

--The whole matter of murdering twelve was a set up to begin with.

Kyousuke was about to tell her the truth but sighed.

More and more people were gathering to watch the commotion so letting them hear would be bad. Explaining to Maina properly would require a different location.

"Let's go somewhere else first? We're attracting too much attention here..."

Saying that, Kyousuke reached out for the shoulder of the crouching Maina. Just at that moment...

"Heeeee!? D-Don't touch me! How can I possibly go with you! Y-You vicious and utterly depraved murderer of twelve! Uwahhhhhhh!"

Maina got up rapidly as though bouncing up and escaped like a fleeing rabbit.

Screaming, she fell over many times and climbed back up on her feet, finally vanishing around a corner.

A pink handkerchief was left behind, fluttering in the air, falling quietly on the floor of the corridor.

Receding into the distance were the sounds of footsteps and crying.

Once these were no longer audible, the surroundings returned to silence.

--For a short while.

"...Twelve people? This guy, I can't believe he killed twelve... I-Is that a joke?"

Prompted by someone's whispers, the corridor suddenly went noisy.

"Twelve people!? Eh? This... no way!? He does have a vicious face, that's true, but..."

"That guy's from Class A, right? Twelve victims done in, that's really terrible? I'm so glad I was put in Class B..."

"So many lives taken... That's amazing! Maybe he'll even take my heart too. Smooch."

"Ku!? Settle down! Settle down, mine arm! ...Alas, 'tis released. We shall be the ones to send him to the grave. But now is not the time. Endure, endure, Azrael!"

Everyone was speaking their mind without any restraint, resulting in a total commotion.

Taking the escaped Maina's place, this time it was Kyousuke's turn to clutch his head.

(S-Shit... Why did the bomb have to be dropped in this kind of place...? It wasn't on purpose, but she really threw me to the wolves... And I even made her so afraid.)

He was trying to unravel Maina's misunderstanding methodically, but unfortunately, it turned the problem into a commotion.

Thanks to that, the existence of the "Mass Murderer of Twelve" had spread to everyone's ears. Kyousuke prayed that this unjust conviction was not going to attract even more weirdos to him--

"Wait up! H-Hey, wait up~"

As all sorts of worries rushed into Kyousuke's mind, he immediately felt someone patting his shoulder.

(Woah!? I think something's got me! By the way, this voice... Is it male or female?)

The wild voice of indeterminate gender brought him a foreboding feeling. Kyousuke turned his head back.

"Hi. Yes, conversation started! Ehe."

Kyousuke found a girl standing there, her unusual body as stout and brawny as Bob Sapp's.

Two meters tall, a meter wide. Her uniform was stretched tight, her bangs were stretched tight. Beneath the blonde bobcut, her round eyes were staring downwards at Kyousuke in an inexplicably flirtatious manner.

Her cheeks, dyed bright red, seemed to be expressing her inner feelings authentically.

"...Heee!?"

Kyousuke backed away wordlessly. Then the Bob Sapp-lookalike, christened Bob henceforth, apparently trying to close the distance between her and Kyousuke, moved her stout, elephant-like leg.

"What's your name? If it's okay with you, let's be fri--"

"I refuse."

"Ahhh."

Pushing away the approaching arm of muscle, Kyousuke fled.

Bob's wild and flirtatious voice called out from behind as Kyousuke escaped like a puff of smoke.

"No, please wait~! I still haven't gotten your name yet~!?"

# Period 2 - Boy Meets Gas Mask / "Brutal Under Ground"

Q. How are the students' daily lives?

A. Basically no different from schools outside. People often describe it as a boarding school for delinquents with teachers who are as harsh as demons. Naturally, Saturdays are holidays. Penal labor takes the place of club activities. Breaking school rules means getting beaten half dead. Attempted escapees will be shot to death... Well, I guess it's not just a little different.

# Brutal Under Ground
# ボーイ・ミーツ・ガスマスク

## 二時間目

**Q.** どんな学生生活を送っているの？

**A.** 基本的には、外界（シャバ）の学校と変わりない。教師が鬼のように厳しい、全寮制の不良校――とでも言ったところか。土日休みも、きちんと存在している。部活動の代わりに刑務作業が行われたり、校則を破ると半殺しにされたり、敷地外へ出ようとすると撃ち殺されたり……些細な違いは色々あるがな。

"Hey, have you heard? In the current first-years, there seems to be a guy who's killed twelve people."

"Twelve!? No way. How can that be possible... Crap, that guy is this year's number one?"

"Most likely. And it was twelve all at once, I think. The total is less than the Murderer Princess, but she's a serial killer after all... But definitely gives her a run for her money in viciousness, right?"

"T-True... But that's already in the past. In terms of current viciousness, this guy definitely wins, I think.:

"..."

Locked in a graffiti-covered washroom stall, Kyousuke was sitting on the toilet seat with his knees drawn up to his chest.

After fleeing in reckless abandon, taking refuge in the boys washroom in the new school building, dozens of minutes had already passed. During this time, the conversations taking place over on the other side of the stall door were virtually all about Kyousuke.

Kyousuke's great accomplishment had apparently spread to the upper year students already.

Forced against his will to learn about the senior student who had murdered far more than twelve, Kyousuke became even more depressed.

(...Sigh. I didn't get to buy lunch. So hungry. I must be fate's toy.)

Clutching the cute, pink handkerchief, Kyousuke held his rumbling stomach.

There were more lessons and the harsh penal labor waiting for him in the afternoon. Surviving on an empty stomach would be tough...

Just at this moment, Kyousuke's mind was suddenly struck by a question. What time is it now?

Kurumiya's cruel smile surfaced in Kyousuke's mind.

--Crap. Instantly, he felt his life drain away.

The lunch break was supposed to be one hour only. Even though there was no watch or clock and impossible to tell the time exactly, this added to his unnecessary worries and anxiety.

Before he knew it, the washroom was already silent.

"Shit!! If I don't hurry back..."

Kyousuke opened the door and rushed out, stumbling. But halfway through, he fell down violently at the exit. Kyousuke frantically climbed back up and charged vigorously before regaining balance completely.

"--Pu!?"

Suddenly looking up, he felt his face crash into a soft sensation. His view was blocked and sealed.

All he heard was a cute scream of "Kyah!?" Even though his face was surrounded by an indescribable sensation and the fragrance of soap, he instantly realized 'Oh no.'

As though pushing down the person he had crashed into, Kyousuke fell in the corridor.

" "....." "

--Silence.

Kyousuke's face remained buried in that soft and fragrant object.

Because the feeling was too comfortable, exhausted in mind and body, Kyousuke almost felt like falling asleep directly. So this was what they called escaping reality. --Ah, Ayaka. Onii-chan is so tired...

Just as Kyousuke's consciousness was drifting away, he heard a quiet voice above his head.

"...Sorry. Isn't it time you move away? From my chest."

Difficult to describe, it was a muffled yet very beautiful soprano voice.

Kyousuke's mind failed to process her words in the beginning. Then slowly, after a while, he finally understood.

(Ch-Chest? No wonder it feels so soft--OH CRAAAAAAAAP!?"

Kyousuke reflexively lifted his face then immediately bounced away and knelt down, prostrating and pressing his forehead on the floor.

"Thanks for the treat! ...Wait, that's the wrong thing to say! You have my undying gratitude! ...No, that's wrong too! I'm very sorry! I'm really very sorry!!!!"

Under the effects of panic and excitement, Kyousuke misspoke repeatedly. Soon his face felt scorching hot like on fire. For the first time after coming to this school, he really felt like dying for real.

Prepared to be condemned by labels of 'Pervert!' 'Molester!' etc, he closed his eyes in resignation.

"Hmm. You're welcome, I guess that's what I should say? ...Anyway, lift your head up first and stand up. It's not very proper to talk while sitting in the corridor, right?"

A polite voice was coming from above.

Feeling troubled by the unexpected response, Kyousuke opened his eyes slowly.

"...Eh? Ah, ha... Y-You're right...?"

The first to enter his view was a pair of white indoor shoes. Next were the curves of a fit pair of legs.

Going up along the fluid lines of the beautiful legs, neither too fat nor too thin, next was a gray miniskirt, followed by the sudden narrowing of the curves at the waist.

From somewhere, an unpleasant "shuko..." sound was heard.

"Goodness gracious, seriously. It's all your fault for jumping out suddenly, startling me. Because you took too long in the washroom, I was thinking it was time to call you. Then you crashed into me... I'm relieved no one got hurt. These puppies usually get in the way, but do come in handy on occasion, yes. I see you in better light now, my breasts!"

Saying that, this girl straightened her back with a light shout.

Supported by her crossed arms, they wobbled and quivered, further emphasizing their existence. S-So massive...

Although Bob whom Kyousuke encountered earlier was unusually large throughout her entire body, only the breasts of this girl were unusually large. Aren't they like watermelons--Kyousuke could not help but wonder about their size.

Furthermore, under her unbuttoned blazer was not a blouse but a flimsy blue parka and a black tank top. The bulging outline was further emphasized.

(My face was buried there all this time just now? C-Crap...)

A part of Kyousuke's pants began to stretch tight. Just at this moment, the girl asked in surprise:

"By the way, could you hurry up and get up? How long are you going to sit here?"

"Eh? Uh, sorry... I'm already up in a different sense. Hahaha..."

"...Different sense? I don't quite get it, but it would be nice if you get yourself up in the manner I'm referring to."

"Sorry, but could you wait a little? I'll have him down in a sec."

"...Down? No, I want you up. So to put in another way, while you're still up in a certain sense, you're unable to get up in my sense, is that what you mean?"

"Yeah, basically... So like I said, wait a bit for me."

"Hooh... No helping it. I'll endure a bit during this time."

"Oh thank you. I'll put him down as fast as I can."

...By the way, this dialogue is totally nuts. It's so moronic, I really wanna dig a hole to hide myself.

Kyousuke endured the terrible feeling and tried to calm down his aroused emotions, then he looked up nonchalantly.

Instantly, he saw the girl's face.

--covered up by a pitch-black gas mask.

"...Huh? ...What the fuuuuuuuuuuuck!?"

Kyousuke took another look, decisively... Indeed, it was no illusion.

The girl's face was firmly covered up by a mask that looked like a gas mask.

A large cylindrical respirator extended from the mouthpiece while the eyepieces were fitted with transparent plastic. Silver hair, evocative of flowing water, protruded out from the opening of her parka's hood over her head.

Even her ears were completely concealed by the massive headphones she was wearing.

A sigh(?) sounding like "shuko..." escaped from the mouthpiece ventilator of the gas mask.

"Goodness gracious. Screaming at the sight of a girl's face... That's very rude. Even if I am a beauty beyond your wildest dreams, you shouldn't do that. Jeez!"

"...Beauty? No, I can't see anything at all."

Due to wearing the weird mask, her facial features were completely impossible to see.

Anyone would probably scream if they encountered this kind of person. Although Kyousuke had met all sorts of weirdos today, in terms of appearance, this girl's abnormality definitely was a strong contender.

Still, Bob beats her by a little bit. Kyousuke wished from the bottom of his heart not to have anything to do with her.

However, this gas masked girl did not know what Kyousuke was thinking and said:

"Oh, speaking of which, I still haven't introduced myself. I am Hikawa Renko, a student in Year 1 Class B. I've heard rumors about you. Supposedly, you've disclosed a kill count of twelve as well?"

It looked like this gas masked girl--Renko--was also attracted by Kyousuke's rumors.

However, Kyousuke discovered a subtle problem with Renko's choice of wording.

--Disclosed a kill count of twelve as well? What the heck's up with this subtle way of speaking?

He looked at Renko's face, but the gas mask hid her expression flawlessly. The eyepieces were like sunglasses with light blocking treatment so even her eyes were not visible.

Under this horrifying feeling, Kyousuke was stuck racking his brain on how to react.

"...Oh? Speaking of which, lunch break will be over soon. The teacher of Class B is very strict on timeliness. I'm very sorry but I have to go."

Renko sighed regretfully. Although it was muffled and hard to tell, that was the only emotion Kyousuke could read from the sound.

"So here's my last request. If it's okay with you, could you tell me your name?"

"Hmm... Name? My name huh. Well..."

--Kyousuke felt troubled. Since she was enrolled in this school, Renko was undoubtedly a convicted murderer too.

Kyousuke's rational mind sounded the alarm. But on the other hand...

"It's okay if you don't want to, you know? I won't hold it against you, so just leave if you don't wanna say it. However, I will cry a bucketload once I get back to the classroom and might very well drown to death in my own tears, however... you don't need to let it weigh on your conscience. Because it all stems from your decision only. In other words, you get to decide my life and death, that's the deal here."

"...Hey. This is a blatant threat."

"No, it isn't, it's not a threat. Can't you take a joke? Going by normal logic, who actually drowns to death from their own tears? Do you really think that this lady here will cry if dumped by a boy, the likes of you? I have a super large and pure heart, seriously able to take jokes, you know?"

"...I see. Then I'll be off."

"Sob... Goosh... Fueh... Sniff..."

"You really are crying!? H-Hey--"

"Goosh... Sob... I've been suffering from hay fever recently."

"No fucking way, you liar of a gas mask. There's no better defense against pollen than this fucking thing here."

"Good point. That excuse was too farfetched just now, foosh."

Foosh was probably laughter.

Kyousuke sighed and stood up. Clearly he had wanted to escape as quickly as possible--but despite feeling quite troubled, he found this gas masked girl to be unexpectedly friendly and easygoing.

Perhaps under this alarming exterior, her inner self was frail yet calm, naive yet understanding. Hence, Kyousuke hesitated.

--Should I get involved with Renko here or not?

At this moment, while Kyousuke was resting his chin on his hand in deep thought, Renko shouted "Very well!" vigorously to him.

"I get it now. Seeing as you seem to be worrying, it can't be helped... I'll take it off."

"Eh... Take it off? You're gonna take it off!?"

The unexpected suggestion caused Kyousuke to look towards Renko's face in shock.

Covered by the heavy gas mask, Renko nodded firmly.

"Yes, I'll take it off. This is to show my sincerity. Is that fine?"

"Yeah... I think it's good."

--This really surprises me. What surprising honesty despite being a convicted murderer.

Despite feeling troubled over the incongruence between Renko's appearance and her inner personality, Kyousuke still felt his heart rate continuing to rise.

"Umm, so... I-I'm going to take it off, okay? It's very embarrassing, but I'll try my best to endure it!"

"O-Okay!"

Kyousuke exclaimed nervously, gulping.

Amidst the silence, Renko first put down her parka's hood.

Her sleek, soft, silver hair fluttered and descended, giving off a soapy fragrance.

Then Renko slowly removed her blazer, then fully opened the front of her parka. Held down by thin fabric, her bosom wobbled softly as a result of the impact. Then finally, she grabbed the lower hem of her tank top with both hands, resolving herself--

"...Hey hey hey, hold it right there. What the fuck are you doing?"

Seeing Kyousuke question in a whisper, Renko went "Hmm?" and tilted her head.

Her skin was so pale it seemed transparent. With the tank top rolled up to just below her breasts, her slender waist was exposed in all its magnificence. Beneath the hem, a faint glimpse was offered of the black lace from her panties.

As Kyousuke stiffened in all senses of the word, Renko expressed her puzzlement.

"You ask me what I'm doing? Of course I'm taking it off... Taking my clothing off. The mask is too unwieldy so I can't take it off, can you forgive me if I only roll my clothing up to this extent? ...N-Not good enough? V-Very well! Then next--"

"...Kamiya Kyousuke."

"Hmm? KA-MI-YA-KYO-U-SU-KE? What's that? Ondul Language?"[3]

"It's Japanese! It's what you just asked for, my name! Year 1 Class A, Kamiya Kyousuke."

"...Eh?"

Seeing Renko's surprised response, Kyousuke's expectations were completely thrown in disarray.

What she meant by taking off was not the gas mask...? That was so misleading.

"Anyway, straighten your clothes properly. If you leave it like this, how should I say it? ...It's poison for the eyes."

"Poison for the eyes? Eh? That so? I was thinking you'd be obsessed with breasts, did I guess wrong? I was thinking if you still refused to tell me after seeing my boobs, I might as well let you grope them as much as you like... Looks like there's no need for that now."

"Eh."

Kyousuke had never regretted his decision this much in the entire fifteen years of his life.

"...Sorry. Actually, that was a fake name just now."

"WHAT DID YOU SAY!? I can't believe you want to do this and that with my boobs so much that you're making this obviously bogus lie!? I see, so you're obsessed to this level..."

The lie that Kyousuke made by suppressing his shame was completely exposed.

Kyousuke had never regretted his decision this much in the entire fifteen years of his life. (A new record.)

"...I'll let this slide for now. Are you okay with time, Kyousuke? I think I might be in trouble on my side. Class B's teacher is an extremely lustful pervert. If I'm late for a second, surely this and that will happen to me, even that~ kind of thing..."

Told an extremely shocking fact, Kyousuke felt his heart rate intensify.

As though bouncing up, Kyousuke looked at Renko's chest--No, face.

"That~ kind of thing! What exactly is that~ kind of thing... No wait! I have to hurry back! You might be able to get away with that kind of punishment in your class, but lateness is deadly in mine!"

"Oh wait!? I don't want that~ to happen to me either... Absolutely NOT!!"

"Like I said, what the heck is that~!?"

Kyousuke ran desperately, rushing to his classroom. A slight moment later, Renko also started moving.

The speakers in the corridor began to vibrate, playing the bell ringing to signal the start of lessons.

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"Are you listening, asshole? If you don't sit properly before the lesson begins, you're just asking to be disciplined. I have mentioned this, yes? ...Are you prepared? Kukuku..."

Inside the now-silent classroom, Kurumiya's sadistic laughter could be heard.

While playing with her steel pipe, she slowly walked down from the lectern.

"You assholes might think I might turn a blind eye just because of excuses like: 'A second late is nothing, right?' 'It was unavoidable so it's fine.' 'It's the first day so it's fine.' The answer is--"

Kurumiya halted in her steps and interrupted her speech.

Sadism weighed heavily in the silence, like a nocked arrow about to be fired, nervous tension and fear kept rising nonstop.

Just as the silence was about to reach its limit, in the next instant--Kurumiya exploded.

"The answer is, of course, NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!"

A heavy, dull sound of blunt impact was heard at the diagonal position behind Kyousuke.

Accompanied by a pitiful scream, the beaten student fell together with his seat, resulting in a great crash.

The air in the classroom instantly went tense, but no one intended to make a sound.

No one wished to provoke Kurumiya. Kyousuke felt totally the same.

...Naturally, Kyousuke was confident that he was the most afraid person in the class.

Kyousuke had sat down merely seconds before the lesson started.

"For crying out loud, are the ears in this year's bastards mere holes for decoration, HUH!?" --Bash.

"Forcing me to discipline two assholes on the first day--HEY!?" --Bash.

"Mohican this morning, you piece of shit now... Are you looking down on me just because I'm a pretty girl? You're looking down on me, aren't you!? Wanna bet if I'll turn you two into minced meat!?"

Bash, bash, bash. Goosha!

"Eh!?" "Pretty girl... At this age..." "Gueh!?" "Higyahhhhhhhhh!?"

Loud cursing and the sounds of impact. Screams and the sounds of flying flesh and blood. An instrumental quartet of violence performed by these four sounds.

Kyousuke stared straight ahead, keeping his back totally straight, shivering repeatedly.

(That's what I'd end up if I didn't make it in time... That was so close.)

Fear and relief flying back and forth in his brain, he suddenly thought of something in the corner of his mind.

--Did Renko get back in time?

Because he was too occupied to care about Renko who he had left behind, who knows what happened?

But seeing as he barely managed to make it, surely, Renko must have...

(...!? No way, is this or that or that~ being done to her right now!? With the whole class watching, those boobs... Fuck! Kyousuke, stop it, stop imagining it! But I'm so curious, super curious... No wait. That chick is in the classroom next door, so I might be able to hear something if I perk up my ears--)

"Hey Kamiya. What the fuck are you snickering about? Are you that happy about your classmate getting disciplined? Hmph... I get it. You are thoroughly rotten to the core."

"...Eh? T-That so?"

Kyousuke's consciousness was just about to pass through the wall and immerse itself in the world of delusions when Kurumiya's low voice pulled him back. Without getting a grasp on his situation, Kyousuke froze.

By the time he regained his senses, he saw Kurumiya standing at the lectern staring coldly down at him, having finished disciplining, a blood-smeared pipe on her shoulder.

"...Hoh? You dare use 'that so' to answer this lady here? I could let you off for deliberately sliding into your seat mere seconds before class to show off, but isn't your attitude in class a bit too unfettered here now? Looks like I must discipline you properly."

"Eh. Umm... Please wait! That's not what I intend at all--"

"...Hoho? Then what are you intending? Why are you making such a joyful look? I'm listening. Explain and beg clearly--First, stand up."

"E-Explain!? Can I ask a question first? May I remain sitting..."

"Not a chance in hell. I must have mentioned that opposition is not tolerated, yes? Are you looking down on me?"

"Huh, vew... vewwy sowee... Puh! Ah geddit... Puh!?"

Poked in the side of the mouth by the bloody pipe, Kyousuke nodded rapidly again and again.

...What the heck? Even if he wanted to turn his face away, the steel pipe would follow up afterwards. Was this a threat? Threatening him to lick the blood off the pipe? Was it because she won't tolerate being looked down at? A cheesy pun?[4]

(The timing is totally bad, damn it... How can I explain myself?)

No matter what, confessing directly that he could not help but smile when imagining the kind of punishment faced by the student in the adjacent class that he had just met, followed by the fact that he could not stand up due to an erection from these delusions, of course that was not going to work at all. Definitely killed during the disciplining process.

Also, Eiri was his neighbor on the left. If he stood up, the fact of his erection was definitely going to be exposed completely.

Only at this time was Eiri not working on her nails, instead, she was glancing at his situation with surprised eyes. --However, even that would be a hundred times better than being bludgeoned to death.

Preparing himself to live the rest of his pitiful life under the female classmates' gazes of derision and contempt, Kyousuke was about to stand up. Coincidentally, just at this moment...

'HUH!? That~ kind of thing... N-NOOOOOOOOOOOOO~~!?'

This faint moaning was coming from the other side of the wall.

(...!? This high-pitched voice... C-Could it be...!?)

Finally calmed down with much difficulty, "little Kyousuke" suddenly perked up once more, energetic as ever. At this moment, semi-reflexively, Kyousuke pulled his body back again in midair, sitting down hard.

"...I see. I finally~ get it, Kamiya. So this is your choice, asshole?"

Kurumiya's tolerance had reached its absolute limit. She began to walk down from the lectern again.

Tossing the twisted steel pipe casually aside, she took out new ones that could be found anywhere.

--Numbering two. Wielding a deadly weapon in each hand, Kurumiya approached Kyousuke.

(Oh man... I'm gonna get flattened like that guy just now? But this can't be helped... Since Renko is accepting her punishment, I, too... What the heck, I don't wanna get killed no matter what.)

Trying to wipe the fresh blood sticking to his lips, despite trying to steel his internal resolve, Kyousuke was unable to control his trembling.

Standing firmly in front of her desk, Kurumiya's eyes, carrying a vicious glint, had Kyousuke squarely in her sights.

"...Any last words before you die?"

Enveloped entirely in burning wrath that resembled a flame haze, Kurumiya swung her deadly weapons.

The heavy pressure of fear crushed Kyousuke so strongly that he could not even move his lips. Silently, Kyousuke bowed his head, gritting his teeth.

"Hmph... I see. In that case, allow me to send you to the afterlife immediately--"

"Yahahhhhhhhh, bitches! I'm back from hell, little girly! Yahahah!"

Accompanied by an acute yell, the door at the front of the classroom was busted open and a man came flying right in.

Stepping on the small, shattered window of the door, laughing in an ear-splitting manner, this guy was--

"...Mohican. You're back so soon, asshole? Looks like you haven't been disciplined enough."

The blood-red Mohican was wrapped in bandages like a mummy as he poked his head inside.

With this grand return after being sent to the infirmary pulled Kurumiya's attention away from Kyousuke.

Kurumiya turned her gaze towards Mohican again, thick veins bulging on her temples.

"...It's currently class time. And you even did that to the door... Are you looking down on me? HUH!? Making a scene in front of me, are you that eager to go back!? Great timing, I'm in a really bad mood right now... I don't care if you're wounded or not, I won't hold back so prepare yourself!"

Enduring Kurumiya's murderous gaze, Mohican went "Ooh!?" for an instant, cowering in fear but immediately found his earlier bravado again and laughed unpleasantly.

"Yahahahaha! Suits me just fine! I won't hold back this time either, little girly. Let fear and pain be branded all over your short little body! I'm serious this time, you see!? Prepare yourself! Yahahahahah!"

Kurumiya's expression went blank as she slowly walked towards Mohican who was laughing nonstop.

"...Consider this a pearl of wisdom to bring back to hell as a souvenir. Assholes who treat me as a 'shorty', 'dwarf', 'grade schooler', 'kindergarten kid'... All end up slaughtered by me without exception."

Kyousuke had totally disappeared from Kurumiya's bloodshot eyes.

"Yawn... Well isn't this nice, Kyousuke. You're saved."

Eiri said with a yawn.

Rather than saved, it would be better described as simply extending his life...

Also due to the malicious provocation, Kurumiya's mood was getting worse and worse.

From her back, pitch-black murderous intent could almost be rising like steam. Facing her head on directly, Mohican was probably going to start trembling, unable to contain his fear--as much as Kyousuke thought that...

"Yahahahaha! Really, isn't the little girly a shorty kindergarten kid? I can't believe you're a grade schooler!? Because you're too short, I totally got the wrong idea! Sorry yo~"

" " "......!?" " "

Everyone's hairs stood on end.

Disbelief was written on everyone's face as they stared at the classmate whose audacity knew no bounds.

Eiri murmured softly: "...definitely a goner."

Kurumiya froze, then went silent, then her shoulders trembled like Maina's.

"Ku... Kukukuku... Fuha... Fuhahaha... Hahhahahaha!"

--She began to roar with laughter.

As though infected by Kurumiya, Mohican also opened his mouth wide.

"Yahaha.. Yahahaha... Yahahahahahhahaha!"

He laughed out loud. After roaring with laughter together harmoniously...

"Iya~, this is killing me with laughter. Kukuku... I haven't laughed this hard for a very long while."

Kurumiya wiped the traces of tears from the corners of her eyes and casually tossed her steel pipes away.

Instantly, she closed in on Mohican. Standing on tip toe she placed her hands on his shoulders then wiped her smile away:

"--You wish to die a million billion times, yes?"

Letting her strength go loose, she dislocated the shoulders in her hands.

"Yaaaaaaaaaaarrrrrrrgggggggggggghhhhh!?"

Kicking Mohican with her heel, she sent him flying then stood on him and swept her gaze across the classroom.

"Hey, you assholes. The afternoon was originally supposed to be a tour of the facilities in the vicinity of the school building, but there's now a last minute adjustment in plans. As much as time permits, I shall demonstrate all sorts of barehanded techniques for torture and interrogation... Well then, let's start with the extremities. First of all, take the fingernail of the index finger and do this--"

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"...Oh my, it's this late already. I think I got too into it. But honestly, I'm totally not satisfied yet... Hmph. I'll let you off with this for today since I'm quite busy too. You lot of swine, don't just focus on playing."

While speaking, Kurumiya pulled Mohican's upper garment off to wipe her blood-smeared hands. Without taking a moment's break from start to finish, Kurumiya immersed herself thoroughly in the task of torture, finally showing a tired expression.

Kurumiya casually tossed the filthy blazer aside, then towards the mosaic'd blob on the floor--the deformed Mohican--she swung her steel pipe using the principles of a golf swing.

Accompanied by a surreal groan, eyes rolled all the way up as he flew in the air, Mohican finally lay unmoving.

The medical team on standby swiftly moved the mosaic'd blob away on a stretcher.

"...Next up, it's now four o'clock. End of school has already snuck on us. Two hours later at 1800 sharp, gather yourselves at the sports field. Then it'll be harsh physical labor all the way until nighttime. A healthy mind requires a healthy body to support it... After all, in this place, you have

penal labor to substitute for club activities twice a day in the morning and evening. Remember this very carefully! Be on time. --Capish?"

The entire class answered Kurumiya clearly and loudly in unison: "Yes ma'am!"

After the torture show featuring screams from hell, the loyalty and devotion known as terror was implanted into each and every student's brain.

"Kukuku... An excellent answer. See you later."

Nodding in satisfaction, Kurumiya picked up extra printouts, carrying them under her arm.

"...Oh dear? It feels like I forgot something important... Oh well, whatever. I'd better hurry back to the office now. I'm hungering for a milkshake and shortbread."

A milkshake and shortbread. She's actually quite cute in strange ways.

"...No wait. I can't give up chocolate cake either... Muumuu."

Chin resting against her hand, Kurumiya pondered while leaving the classroom. --Moments later...

"I-I'm SAAAAAAAAAAVED! ...I almost wet myself."

Kyousuke cried out and collapsed on his desk in exhaustion.

"That was super close... I thought I was dead meat."

The "something important" Kurumiya forgot was of course, disciplining Kyousuke.

Seeing torture demonstrations over and over again, he was worrying if he was up next, trembling in fear. Kyousuke finally was able to put down the time bomb suspended in his heart that could go off any moment.

"...Isn't that nice? Thanks to that single-celled organism, you're saved."

"Ah, yeah... It's all thanks to that guy that I survived like this."

Kyousuke offered words of gratitude to Mohican who had saved him from his crisis.

Farewell, Mohican. Thank you, Mohican. Rest in peace...

"...Then what? What are your plans next?"

"Next? Oh right, it's after school. What should I do...?"

Faced with Eiri's question, Kyousuke sat up and pondered.

After Period 5 ended and before penal labor, there was still a total of two hours.

Students were free to do whatever they wanted during this break. As long as they got changed and assembled before the appointed time, anything was fine--That was the situation.

Just as Kyousuke was stuck deciding how to spend his free time...

"...Hey look. Isn't that the guy? The murderer who killed twelve victims."

Suddenly, an unfamiliar boy's voice was heard from the corridor.

Kyousuke felt the life sucked out from his entire body. A commotion seemed to be starting over in the corridor.

...A foreboding feeling. Kyousuke slow turned his gaze over.

"Geh!? H-He's looking over here... Such scary pressure. I thought my heart was gonna stop!"

"Hey, you're in trouble! You're gonna get killed! How about kneeling and begging for mercy!?"

"Say, isn't that pool of blood from when that guy killed someone? The door's broken too..."

"Wow, amazing... I really wanna get killed and eaten by him... Smooch."

"Nay! I shalt be the one who killeth his life and eateth his flesh! Not I but we! Mine arm of the left, Azazel, pleadeth to me in supplication... 'Make haste and kill thee' 'Make haste and eat thy flesh'... Kamiya Kyousuke."

"...What the fuck?"

Students who had heard rumors of Kyousuke were gathering in the corridor, peeking into the classroom through the ajar door and the gaps in the metal bars. The narrow corridor seemed to be crowded like a packed train.

These gazes were totally focused on one person, Kyousuke. The pressure was no joke at all.

"...Isn't this nice? You're a celebrity now."

Eiri congratulated Kyousuke sarcastically. This was nothing to get happy about.

As a side note, the true culprit responsible for this commotion was Maina...

"Hope for world peace, hope for world peas, ouch, bit my tongue--"

Clutching her head with eyes closed tightly, she was begging for world peace.

Kyousuke really hoped to clear up the misunderstanding as soon as possible, but trying to do that in this kind of situation might make things worse.

(Hey hey hey, what should I do... This is totally stalemate.)

Perhaps scared of Kyousuke or maybe restraining one another... The students in the corridor simply observed him from outside without anyone entering the classroom to talk.

Kyousuke wanted to flee as soon as possible but the corridor was blocked completely with no place to walk.

Sweating profusely, Kyousuke was frozen in place. --Just at this moment...

"Excuse me, is Kyousuke here? Kyousuke? Kyousuke... Ah, I've found you."

Among the crowd, a face with a black gas mask suddenly poked out. It was Renko.

Saying "please give me some room to pass" and "excuse me", Renko pushed through the crowd, unfazed by the surrounding gazes, walking steadily into the classroom.

"Ah, hello again after an afternoon! Did you get to class on time? Foosh."

"I guess... I barely managed to get in on time, but..."

In contrast to the lively and energetic Renko, Kyousuke answered in a low voice.

The clamoring students were instantly speechless, perking their ears to listen to Kyousuke and Renko's conversation. Thanks to that, it made talking even more of a pain.

But Renko did not find it so. Unconcerned with who was listening, she continued:

"Phew. Wonderful, you made it... But? But what?"

"Oh nothing... I'm referring to you, umm..."

"Yes. Very unfortunately, I was almost ten seconds late to class. Then--"

Renko sighed with a "shuko." Kyousuke gulped.

The voice of the girl he heard in class kept replaying in his brain.

"The teacher arrived roughly twenty seconds late, so I was saved."

"I see, how tragic... Eh? What'd you say? You were saved?"

How weird--That girly moan, was it an illusion?

"Yes. But there was a girl who was one minute late. What a poor dear... She became the sacrifice to that~ sort of thing. How tragic for that girl who's big in all directions."

"What did... you say?"

...An illusion would've been a hundred times better. Back then was totally not a situation where Kyousuke should have imagined Renko (or rather, her breasts) getting punished while aroused, trying to find a hole to shove it in.

After hearing about this, rather than wanting a hole to shove it in, he now wanted a hole to bury himself.

"She said that she was late because she was too intent on searching for someone. She should be in the infirmary right now... But are you the one she's looking for?"

"...As much as I hate to admit, I'm guessing it is. I can't think of anyone else matching her description."

Clutching his head, Kyousuke groaned.

"Shit, damn it... That girl Bob still hasn't given up, huh."

"...Isn't that nice? You're so popular, Kyousuke."

Eiri remarked sarcastically.

Faster than Kyousuke could turn to the side, Renko went "Oya?" and tilted her head, looking at Eiri who was still working on her nail art.

"Are you Kyousuke's friend? Nice to meet you. I'm Hikawa Renko from Year 1 Class B. Despite how I may look, I'm actually sixteen years old."

"...What do you mean, despite how you may look? Your face is completely covered." Rather than reacting to Renko's silly pretension, Eiri simply glanced at the friendly hand that Renko had extended and ignored it.

"......Eiri."

While applying a topcoat of nail polish over her carefully arranged nail art, Eiri announced her name curtly.

Renko was taken aback briefly then nodded and withdrew her hand simply.

"Oh, sorry sorry. I'm a bit poor at reading situations. I shouldn't be asking you for a handshake while you're occupied with something like this... Foosh. Because of the mask, my view is very narrow."

"...Something like this? What do you mean by that?"

Eiri looked up and glared violently at Renko's gas mask.

"Hmm? No, I mean your nails are very pretty. I love this kind too."

"......I see. Isn't it basic for girls to be working on fashionability whenever there's nothing else to do?"

Hearing Renko's carefree words, Eiri shrugged and continued to immerse herself in her nail art.

Using red nail polish as a base and decorated with rhinestones, her nails were extremely exquisite and beautiful. The black borders at the tips were also trimmed carefully. The whole job looked like it came from a master's hands indeed.

"Foosh. Yes yes, looking fashionable is a girl's hobby! Say, Kyousuke--"

"Hmm? What's up? I'll get this out of the way first. Your mask does not count as fashionable."

"Yes. Kyousuke, I'd like to ask if you're free at noon tomorrow..."

--The topic of fashionability was majestically brushed aside.

"If it's okay with you, let's have lunch together? I want lots of time to chat with you. In fact, I originally wanted to talk after school... But it looks like it's very noisy. What do you say?"

"Lunch tomorrow? Oh... Sorry, Renko, I want to eat on my own..."

"If you agree, I'll let you touch me any way you like, okay?"

"Any way I like? By any way I like, you really mean any way I like!?"

"Yes. You may enjoy the mask's smooth texture any way you like."

"...You're talking about that!? That's totally misleading..."

Kyousuke stood up in excitement then sat down again in disappointment.

Eiri threw a lukewarm glance at him.

"...Huh? Where is your mind wandering off, molester. Pervert."

Eiri's eyes were showing derision and malicious intent. Her chest--indeed--it really was like a clean precipice on a cliff side.

Compared to Renko's massive bulge of a bosom, hers was pitifully flat.

"...Where are you looking at? Would you like my help in cutting it off?"

"You're the one who should watch where you're looking! Don't say something super horrifying like cutting it off, okay!?"

"...No big deal. Either way, it's just a crude and tiny Pork Bits sausage, right?"

"Of course not! It might not be as big as a frankfurter, but at least it's a hot dog sausage--"

As Kyousuke's voice gradually grew violent, he suddenly covered his mouth with an "Ah!"

He could hear students and teachers whispering among themselves. "...Hot dog?" "To think it's a hot dog!" Kyousuke really felt like using his suicide impulse to drive his body to the wall and bang his head against it.

Renko sighed with a "shuko."

"Why did you suddenly start talking about sausages? But... You really seem like great friends! I'd like to join in too. --Oh right!"

Renko clapped her hands together, causing her giant bust to bounce in response.

"How about you join us for lunch tomorrow, Eiri? Encounters are a kind of fate too! ...How's that? Don't you find this idea great? Foosh."

Renko's innocent attitude unlike what her appearance would suggest, combined the massive wobbling mammary mass, was causing Eiri to reach her limit. Turning her face with an expression that read "I wanna get away from here", she spoke in resignation:

"...Well ...sure. I don't really mind..."

"She agreed, Kyousuke. Wonderful! Oh my~, I'm really looking forward to lunch tomorrow."

"Oh right... Hey, hold it right there. I haven't said I'm going yet, right?"

"Eh? You're not coming, Kyousuke? ...Why? Sob sob cry cry."

"Don't go 'sob sob cry cry' with your mouth on purpose, okay? If you ask why, it's still--"

Confronted with the question, Kyousuke had difficulty answering. Speaking of reasons, naturally, it was because Kyousuke was an ordinary person who had never killed before, so he had no wish to get involved with these murderers. Even so, he could not possibly tell them honestly.

(Besides, given the current situation, I can't possibly eat lunch in peace by myself anyway...)

Seeing the crowds of students gathered in front of the classroom, Kyousuke felt his future looked bleak.

The gazes of these people, murderers, felt stinging. Fear or admiration were fine but among them were mixed dangerous emotions like jealousy, hostility or even killing intent.

No matter what, Kyousuke wanted to avoid getting caught by these psychos.

He was truly facing a life-threatening crisis. Staying alone, he would probably get killed the moment he lowered his guard.

In that case, might as well--

"...Yeah, I understand. I'll go."

Kyousuke nodded and calculated in his heart.

Class A's top murderer with six victims. The unknown Number One of a gas mask.

Although Kyousuke felt that there was no one more tricky to handle than these two girls, if he could get them on his side, they might turn out to be quite reliable...

"Eh? Really!? Wonderful! I'm so glad. Let's have a party tomorrow! Foosh."

"...Weren't you so reluctant earlier? Deciding to come in the end, what an indecisive guy."

Hearing Kyousuke's answer, Renko was ecstatic while Eiri's expression relaxed slightly.

After all, I'm just getting them on my side, not making friends with them--These were just "measures" for survival.

Kyousuke decided to keep getting along with these girls.

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The Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation was a full boarding system.

The reason was very simple, to prevent students from escaping.

Although the Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation was established with the goal of rehabilitating juvenile murderers, there were still clear lines that distinguished it from common educational institutions.

For example, the school grounds were enclosed in concrete walls with fencing. Guards patrolled twenty-four hours on shifts and were apparently authorized to fire at will against escaping inmates.

Since the school itself was built on a remote island, a successful prison break was completely impossible.

Speaking of the detention facilities here, security was unparalleled.

--But upon further thought, one could not help but admit that the school offered a surprising amount of personal freedom within its confines.

It was already impossible to decide clearly whether this place was strict or lax.

A penitentiary where juvenile convicted murderers were gathered. Everything was a mystery starting with its existence. One could understand if it were just juvenile convicts, but why only murderers?

The enrollment introduction today had not explained this completely.

"Oh well, letting thoughts go wild isn't gonna help... I'm dead tired."

While suffering Kurumiya's abuse, penal labor included weeding, repairing and maintaining school buildings, transporting supplies and other physical work. After finishing the four hours of penal labor, Kyousuke's body and mind were totally falling apart.

Throwing aside the printout handed out during the enrollment introduction, Kyousuke lay down on prepared mattress bed.

A simple bed frame with a thin mattress on top, it was quite uncomfortable to sleep on.

The window offering a view of the navy-blue night sky was fitted with metal bars like over in the school building.

One side of the walkway was a wall with metal fencing on top and locked on the outside.

The cramped room made of concrete was virtually devoid of furniture. There was only a desk, a chair and a small shelf with western toilet installed in the corner.

A jail cell style at a glance, this was actually a room in the student dorms.

"Spending three years in this kind of fucking place? No way, there's no fucking way I can do that..."

Kyousuke began to grumble, dressed in a white outfit with black stripes.

This was the symbol of being a prisoner. Quite fitting for a convicted murderer, right?

--However.

"I didn't kill anyone in the first place. No one... I didn't."

The instant the words slipped out of his mouth, he felt rage surging, impossible to suppress. Although it was just a brief instant, Kyousuke

questioned his false charges, feeling his weakness and the unfairness of reality.

"Argh, damn it! I didn't do anything wrong at all, why do I have to suffer this..."

Kyousuke gnashed his teeth to suppress the violent emotion sprouting in his heart and turned himself over in bed.

After getting arrested, before enrolling in this school, he had asked himself who knows how many times.

Why. Why. Why. Why--No answer.

There was penal labor early next morning waiting for him. The instant he decided to close his eyelids, the image surfacing before his eyes was the face of his precious family.

(.....Ayaka.)

Every time he recalled the younger sister he had left behind, deep cracks would erupt in Kyousuke's heart.

--Ayaka, what is she doing now?

The last thing he saw was Ayaka's worried face, deeply branded in his memory.

Ever since the day he was taken away by the detective, Kyousuke had not seen Ayaka's face again.

Rocked by developments as though amidst waves in a stormy sea, Kyousuke was directly transferred from detainment to jail then went under trial--By the time he noticed, he was already sent here to enroll in this school.

But what was his sister doing now...? It was easy to imagine with just a little thought.

With Kyousuke suffering this sort of treatment, Ayaka was definitely the most heartbroken.

Ayaka was definitely hurt and crying. The little sister hiding in a dark room, covered in a blanket, hugging her knees, body trembling, sobbing nonstop. Kyousuke could easily imagine all this.

Ever since the past, when Ayaka suffered malicious bullying at school, that was how she acted every night--

(.....Sorry.)

Seeing his usually cheerful and lively little sister in that state, Kyousuke had resolved himself to become stronger than anyone. In order to protect Ayaka and prevent her from getting hurt again, to prevent her from feeling sad again, Kyousuke sought strength.

Starting then, although he had worried Ayaka on occasion, he had never allowed her to be hurt again nor made her sad again.

--That was supposed to be the way things were going. But then everything was overturned, Kyousuke was...

(Ayaka was right. If I keep acting reckless... One day I'd get caught up in trouble beyond the point of no return. I'm so sorry that your big brother is such a moron. But...)

The blue-white light scattering on the bed caused Kyousuke to clench his fist.

(...It's not over yet. The whole thing isn't over yet.)

If he could "graduate" successfully, he should be able to return to the outside world.

Then he would be able to see Ayaka again and protect her.

Then he would be able to apologize to her.

--So.

(No matter what happens, I must endure... I don't care if they're all murderers surrounding me, I don't care if I'm getting targeted by a demon of a teacher, despite getting thrown into prison unreasonably, I must... get out alive.)

# Period 3 - Disaster Born from the Worst Clumsy Girl / "Destructive Hurricane"

Q. What does penal labor involve?

A. Simply stated, it's random chores. Cleaning and maintaining the school buildings, weeding the school yard, trimming plants, planting fields, massaging teachers' shoulders... It does depend on the situation and who's in charge, with further variations based on mood. Also, during penal labor, everything requires explicit permission be it getting a drink of water, going to the washroom, a short break etc... Anyone who acts without permission will be instantly disciplined, you know?

# Destructive Hurricane
# 災厄にして最悪のドジっ娘

## 三時間目

**Q.** 刑務作業は何をしているの？

**A.** 早い話が雑用・雑務だな。校舎の掃除や修繕、校庭の草むしりに花壇の手入れ、畑耕作から教師の肩叩きまで……時と場合や担当者、気分によって様々だ。尚、刑務作業の最中は、何をするにもいちいち許可を取らねばならない。水分補給も、手洗いも、小休憩も……無断の場合は、即座に調教するぞ？

"I-I'm gonna die... I'll be dead if this shit continues."

After first period, as soon as Kurumiya exited the classroom, Kyousuke collapsed on his desk.

One elbow on her desk, legs crossed, Eiri was yawning in carefree manner.

Face resting on his desk, Kyousuke secretly glanced at the side of Eiri's face.

"Eiri, say... You really dare to show this kind of attitude in front of that demon of a teacher."

"...No big deal. Unlike you or Mohican, I'm not being targeted."

Eiri spoke nonchalantly while shifting her gaze over to the desk to the right of Kyousuke.

Over there, fresh blood was dripping from a desk that had been broken in half completely.

Before lesson started, Mohican was already gone.

Early this morning, Mohican had said to Kurumiya: "You're looking real cute today, a shorty as usual~ Yahahaha!" Seeking death, he was flattened in less than two seconds. Thanks to him, Kurumiya's mood instantly went bad.

The ones caught up in the consequences were the other students (mainly Kyousuke).

"That's totally weird... Why am I the only one who's asked to tell jokes during Ethics class? I can't believe she went 'Hey Kyousuke. I'm in a bad mood. Make me laugh.' That's fucking crazy. Total bullshit. And faced with discipline if it's not funny... What kind of fucking ethics is that?"

"...Oh well, isn't it nice? You managed to make her laugh anyway."

"A scoff counts? That kind of mood was totally like a public execution, sheesh..."

While saying this, Kyousuke instantly recalled the icy atmosphere in the classroom, making him more and more worried.

Kyousuke's performance was an imitation of 'a server at Mochu Burger.' 'Oh, incoming call. Mochu Mochu.'[5]

--I really wanted to die... Amidst awkward silence, only Maina burst out laughing. "Mochu Mochu... puhuhu."

Kyousuke only managed to live thanks to Maina's laughter.

At this moment, Kyousuke suddenly decided that he must return Maina's favor.

(The misunderstanding needs to be cleared too. I'd better talk to her sooner... Eh? Ara?)

Checking the handkerchief in his pocket, Kyousuke looked back at Maina's seat, but she was gone.

Baffled, Kyousuke looked around. --Found her. Maina's petite body was cowering behind the classroom door as though trying to exit the room discreetly without anyone noticing.

But apparently, Kyousuke was not the only one who noticed Maina.

"...She's being targeted, that girl."

Eiri whispered. Kyousuke silently frowned.

Three boys, leaning against the wall, chatting amiably--Shinji, Usami and Oonogi--were about to follow Maina, leaving the classroom in a suspicious and furtive manner.

Shinji was the leader. The strangler who had killed two female victims with his bare hands, a necrophiliac. His eyes were narrowed like a poisonous snake targeting prey while he licked his dry lips cracking in a grin.

"Ah... Excuse me. I'm just gonna go out for a bit."

Only an instant's hesitation. Faster than his words, Kyousuke's body had already moved on its own.

Eiri looked up at Kyousuke who had kicked his chair away and stood up.

"...Hmm? How unexpected. You're prepared to go out of your way to rescue her? Or you're just taking a piss?"

"Don't be silly. Of course I'm going to rescue her. How could I leave her to the wolves?"

"...Eh? That's so kind of you, Kyousuke. --Despite being a mass murderer of twelve."

"S-Shut up... There are times when I save people, okay!?"

Kyousuke shuddering from almost saying the wrong thing. Eiri stared at her fingertips while saying:

"I understand how you feel... After all, if you're not going, I would have gone myself."

Like murmuring to herself, she was whispering quietly. Kyousuke frowned in puzzlement.

"If I didn't go... Then what?"

"...Nothing at all. Say, aren't you going to hurry? You'll lose their trail."

"Oh shit! Then I'll be back soon. I'll try not to start a fight."

"...Not start a fight? Oh well, whatever... Just take care not to get killed."

Eiri waved lightly. While she saw him off, Kyousuke rushed out of the classroom.

However, her final sentence was a bit unnecessary, yet the possibilities it presented were so terrifying that Kyousuke could not laugh at all.

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"Heeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!?"

Rushing down the stairs, Kyousuke heard Maina scream in her crisis.

(Maina!? Those guys really make their move too fast!)

After charging down the stairs, Kyousuke kept close to the wall to peek at the situation for now first.

Maina was surrouned in front of the girls' washroom. Shinji and the hunched back and creepy boy were closing in on Maina while the dreadlocks guy blocked the way. A total of three.

No other people could be sensed in the surroundings. Although there were many students, they were probably in the classrooms.

"W-W-W-W-W-Why!? Please don't come near me! If you come any nearer, I'll do that! I'll call the p-plice... call the police!?"

Confronting Maina who was pressing her back against the wall in fear, Shinji froze for a moment then laughed wryly.

"Oya oya. There's no need to be afraid, you know? I'm not going to hurt you. I just want to talk. By the way, the 'police' are not going to come."

"Ooh... Pleez dun imitet meee."

Seeing Maina's head down, her face red, the dreadlocks-wearing Oonogi burst out laughing.

"Pffft. This chick bites her tongue way too much, eh! Don't be so afraid, we're not planning on this or that. Just relax. Hahaha! ...That right, Shinji?"

"Indeed, that goes without saying. We're not going to do anything straight away, Maina-san. We're soulmates. Let us slowly build up our relationship, going through all the proper steps, shall we?"

"H-Heehee... Striped panties, striped panties... Pale blue on a white background... H-Heeheehee..."

The boys exchanged glances and laughed. Their expression betrayed their true intentions.

The hunchback Usami had knelt down his short body directly to openly look under her skirt. Eyes closed tightly, Maina apparently did not notice.

School designated panties. So not only black, but there are also blue variants huh...

(Hey... That's totally irrelevant right now!? Hurry and save her, Kamiya Kyousuke!)

Kyousuke reset his face, took a deep breath, clenched his fists and prepared himself. Sticking his hands in his pockets, he pretended to look natural as he walked out.

"...So, Maina-san. Please do have lunch together with us today--"

"Ara? Isn't this Shinji? Fancy meeting you here! I can't believe I ran into you in this kinda place. Whatchu doin'...?"

...Eh? Just as Kyousuke was waving, he suddenly froze.

"--HUH?"

Shinji's face, turning towards him, was absolutely scary.

Bloodshot, half-opened eyes plus his twisted lips, Shinji looked as though he was about to kill someone. However, perhaps because he realized it was Kyousuke, he swiftly changed back to a friendly smile.

"Aha, isn't this Kamiya-san here? Which blowing wind brought you to this place?"

"Oh nothing... Nothing, really? Because the washrooms upstairs are such a mess~ H-Hahaha..."

Kyousuke shivered from the sight of Shinji's instantaneous change and tried to smooth things over with a laugh.

--For a very brief instant, he really thought he was going to be killed.

The erupted cold sweat was sliding down his back.

"Oh I see. The ones on the first floor are very empty except for lunch time."

"...Yeah. By the way, what are you doing here?"

Kyousuke controlled his almost trembling body and asked.

Naturally, Maina entered his view, but he simply pretended not to see her.

Oonogi clicked his tongue overtly.

"Tsk... None of yer fuckin' business, yo? So cocky just cuz you killed twelve!? Cut the bullshit and get yo' ass outta here, bitch ass punk."

"..."

This dreadlocks guy clearly saw Kyousuke as an eyesore, glaring at him from the edge of his slightly slid down sunglasses. This guy had something about him, difficult to describe, similar to Mohican.

Shinji went "just leave it", trying to convince and stop Oonogi who looked like he was going to charge immediately and grab Kyousuke.

"Excuse me, Kamiya-san. We are all incurable murderers... which makes us jealous of you who has killed twelve victims and enjoying great popularity with boys and girls alike. Fufu."

"Oh... I see. Sorry for making you guys unhappy."

--This kind of jealousy, gimme a break.

Kyousuke tried to find something else to say instead and swallowed his true thoughts, making a friendly smile on the spot.

"H-Heehee... Round curves, so cute, pale white thighs so cute too... H-Heeheehee..."

Only Usami was ignoring Kyousuke's presence completely, continuing to observe the bottom of Maina's skirt from all sorts of angles.

"......Huh?"

At this moment, Maina who had been hanging her head, timidly opened her eyes.

Her pupils wavering in fear and unease, she caught sight of Kyousuke.

--Instantly, her flaxen-colored eyes started to widen progressively.

In order to ease Maina from getting frightened, Kyousuke tried his best to speak cheerfully:

"Good morning, Maina! I guess this is our second time speaking? Come to think of it, Maina, you dropped your handkerchief last time--"

"Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeek!? K-K-K-K-Ka... Ka... Kamiya Kyouchuke!? E-E-Eeee!? Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeek!?"

"...Ah, yeah. It's me."

Probably wanting to back away, Maina struck her back hard against the wall.

Like last time, Maina pointed a trembling finger at Kyousuke, her face filled with terror and surprise.

"W-W-W-W-Why are you here... Huh!? I geddit now! They're all here on Kyouchuke's orders, right!? They're all your flunkies, right!? Why are things like this..."

Biting her tongue excessively, her speech was very hard to follow.

Nevetheless, a certain word was heard clearly.

"Flunkie!? Who are you calling whose flunkie? HEY!?"

Ears perking in reaction, Oonogi shouted angrily.

Thanks to that, Maina became more and more frightened, screaming "Eeeek!?" Even her eyes were beginning to swirl.

As Maina covered her head with both hands and went "awawawawa...", swaying unsteadily, Kyousuke extended his hand.

"Calm down, Maina! I'm not in cahoots with them, it's just coincidence--"

"NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!?"

Maina screamed, evaded Kyousuke's extended arm, making use of her short stature, she rushed past Kyousuke, intending to flee. However...

"Hey... Hold it right there!"

Instantly reacting, Oonogi grabbed Maina's arm.

--Then immediately...

"Oh my!!?"

Tripping, Maina fell violently. --Instantly...

"Woah!? Wahhhhhhhhhh!?"

Maina's habitual falling motion caused Oonogi, who was grabbing her arm, to be thrown magnificently.

Flying to almost ceiling height, Oonogi was thrown through the air, landing in the corridor five meters ahead. "Kyah!?" Crack. An inauspicious sound was heard near his neck.

" " "......Huh?" " "

Not just Kyousuke for obvious reasons, but even Shinji and Usami were stunned.

Was it by chance? Or on purpose? ...Difficult to tell.

Using the power of falling to throw someone--Or rather, falling over at the precise moment when someone was about to throw her, it was a total mess already, whether accident or intentional.

Fallen over on the corridor, Maina looked up and saw Oonogi who was lying on the floor, face up.

"...Ah... Ah... A-Ahhh..."

Staring at Oonogi who was neither speaking nor moving, Maina began to tremble, her shoulders heaving greatly.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!? I-I... I killed again!!? A-A-A-A-A-A-Are you okay!? Awawawa."

Maina stumbled and stood up, rushing over to Oonogi's side.

"Urghh..." Oonogi groaned helplessly. Looks like he's not fully dead yet.

Oonogo's dreadlock-adorned head looked up, meeting gazes with Maina as she rushed over.

Maina's face was instantly radiant.

"Oh!? Thank goodness! You're still alive--Oh noooooooo!?"

Instantly, Maina tripped again, falling over with force rivaling the earlier fall.

At this moment, Maina accidentally stuck her elbow out.

"Guhu!?"

She accidentally struck Oonogi in the stomach, resulting in a flawless elbow drop.

Powered by a running start, the elbow drop seemed to be particularly powerful. This time, Oonogi frothed in the mouth, his eyes rolled over and he stopped moving.

" " "....." " "

--No wait. That must've been intentional.

As much as Kyousuke could not help thinking that, Maina was acting quite strange. She instantly stood up and spun herself near Oonogi extremely awkwardly.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh!? O-O-O-O-Oh no, what should I do!? I killed again I killed again... Awawawa. Umm, umm--Iyahhhhhhh!?"

"Oooph!?"

--She fell again. After the elbow drop, this time, Maina's knee smashed into Oonogi's crotch.

Forcibly brought back to consciousness, Oonogi could not help but groan in suffering from the intense pain.

"Eeeeeeeeeek!? C-Calm down... Calm down a bit, little old me! Relax relax relax... No that's not right! Oh no oh no, at this rate, again..."

In front of the dizzy Oonogi, the anxious Maina panicked more and more.

Fall. Elbow strike. Fall. Knee strike. Fall. Cross chop--An amazing display of incredible combo moves. Furthermore, Maina meant no harm at all.

Standing up again and again, falling over again and again. Maina's face was totally a mess of tears. All that was visible was anxiety, confusion, fear--an expression of total panic.

While Kyousuke and Shinji stood there in shock, Usami sprang into action.

Crawling on the floor, he closed in on Maina who had stood up after ending a total of eight crushing blows delivered to a fallen opponent.

His ten fingers moving restlessly, he closed in all at once. "Eh!? What's coming over!?" Noticing Usami approaching, Maina screamed and yelled, at a loss, then...

"Ah, umm... T-This... Umm... Ooh... Umm..."

"H-Heehee... Strip off the panties, then strip off the clothes, then the skin... H-Heeheehee..."

"I-I'm so sorry for being born!"

"Heeheehee!?"

--Crash. The falling head smash straight into Usami's face.

Blood spurting uncontrollably from his nose, Usami collapsed with a thud. The flying white fragments were probably his front teeth.

On the other hand, Maina seemed to be unhurt after the collision, still energetically waving her arms and legs in a panic.

What an amazingly tough rock. Of course, the more she panicked, the more...

"Iyahhhhhhhhh!?"

"Yarghhh!?"

Congratulations to Usami, he had also become food for clumsiness.

"Iyah!?" "Gah!?" "Iyah!?" "Gagah!?" "Iyah!?" "Gaoshh!?"

Amidst Maina and Usami's alternating screams, Shinji asked:

"Hey, Kamiya-san... What song is this?"

"What? ...Don't ask me that kind of question."

As Kyousuke and Shinji watched in surprise and fear, Maina stood up unsteadily.

While hits rained down on the fallen, Usami's nose was probably smashed entirely. Maina, from her face down to her chest was stained by the slashing blood. From her wide open eyes, tears fell down nonstop.

"Oh no... I killed again, I killed again... Ooh... Sniff. What to do, what to do, what to do, what to do... Umm, umm... Auau... Ah."

At this moment, Maina's wandering gaze caught sight of Kyousuke and Shinji.

Her wavering eyes looked like they belonged to an abandoned puppy.

Maina reached out towards them, like a drowning person grasping at straws.

"Uwah!? D-Don't come over! Uwahhhhhhhhhh!?"

--Shinji fled.

The wicked murderer, who had two female victims, ran without looking back.

"......Ah."

Maina froze for an instant. Her trembling body stopped.

Only her extremely widened eyes continued to pour tears out nonstop, wavering.

"M-Maina...?"

"...I really get into misunderstandings so easily."

Kyousuke was just about to speak when Maina spoke weakly and quietly.

Her tears slid across her face, smiling in self-mockery, then fell to the floor.

"Murderers everywhere around me, I'm so scared, wanna escape, I hate it... So idiotic. Clearly I'm a complete murderer as well, to be feared, to be avoided, to be hated... Clearly I'm supposed to be held in comtempt. I'm so stupid. Because of my past mistakes, who knows when I'll make them again..."

"...Hey... Are you okay? Anyway, calm down first--"

"Don't come near me!!"

Just when Kyousuke wanted to walk over, Maina screamed violently.

Eyes closed, hands clutching her head, she bowed her head as though she would break down any moment.

"Please don't come near me... I don't wanna hurt anyone anymore... Don't wanna lose anyone. Don't want anyone to die from my clumsiness...

Sorry... I'm so sorry that someone like me lives in this world... Sob... Sob... Sniff..."

"..."

At a loss for words, Kyousuke remained rooted to the spot. Maina continued to sob nonstop. At this moment, the bell rang to signal the end of the break.

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"...Hey assholes, are you ready for a trip to hell?"

Several minutes later, Kyousuke was stuck in a bind, wonderng what he could say to Maina who looked like she was not going to stop crying any time soon, when he heard the lolita voice, which he absolutely wanted to hear the least, sounding loudly in the corridor.

Hands covering her face, Maina suddenly shook all over.

"--Five times. Do you understand what this number means? This is the number of times I've had to discipline someone during the second day. Basically, all done to that annoying Mohican... Only making work for me. How much more of my displeasure will you assholes incur before you're satisfied? HUH!?"

"Sensei, no! Umm--"

Just as Kyousuke was about to turn around, a crimson object flew past his face.

The object Kurumiya had thrown with one hand, traced out a gentle parabola and fell in front of Maina, right in between Oonogi and Usami.

A boy covered from head to toe in blood.

A completely unrecognizable Shinji after receiving discipline.

"...Hmm? Ah... E-Eeeeeeeeeek!?"

Looking up and seeing Shinji's state, Maina backed away at full speed.

Her ass sticking to the corridor, she instantly scrambled past Kyousuke.

"--Hey, wait up. Where are you going? I'm not going to let you escape."

"Eeeek!? S-S-S-S-Sorry!"

Just as Maina was about to rush past Kurumiya when she was caught by the collar and lifted up.

Held in Kurumiya's other hand was a bloody steel pipe.

"Eeeeeeek!? Forgive me! F-Forgive me--Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeek!"

In utter panic, Maina waved her slender arms and legs, struggling desperately.

But Kurumiya used a murderous voice and expression, readying the steel pipe and threatened: "--Shut up! Wanna get ****** in the **** by this thing?" Hence, Maina went quiet instantly, lowering her eyes like a dead fish.

Saying **** and ****** in a lolita voice, Kurumiya-sensei really was the worst.

"...Hmph. Head over to the punishment room and explain yourself clearly, Igarashi. This commotion seems to be caused by you. I already bashed the basic story out of Saotome whom I caught in the corridor. Say..."

Kurumiya instantly looked at Kyousuke.

"...Why are you here, Kamiya? I knew it, you're the true culprit? ...Tsk. Whatever. Come with me to the punishment room together. That's enough looking down on me, asshole... Just watch and see that I don't take this opportunity to discipline you real good. You're not gonna escape this time, y'know?"

"...Guh."

Kyousuke's objections almost reaching his vocal cords were forced back down while he gritted his teeth.

--Speaking of true culprit, it was true in a way perhaps.

Because of Kyousuke's intervention, the originally unsettled Maina became even more unsettled, thus causing the series of uproars.

Disciplined for causing this could not be helped.

Kyousuke pressed on his neck, or rather, the bottom of his abdomen.

"...I understand. But, umm, because it's my first time... Could you be a bit gentler?"

"Yes, leave it to me. I will use intense and stimulating play to bring you to ecstasy."

"Uh."

No use arguing with her. Kurumiya walked over, dragging Maina with one hand.

Casually throwing the steel pipe away, Kurumiya's freed hand went to grab Kyousuke's hair violently.

"Please wait, Kurumiya-sensei!"

--Just before Kyousuke was actually grabbed.

Maina forced out a voice and called out. Kurumiya stopped.

"I-It's got nothing to do with Kyousuke-kun! He just happened to pass by... I was caught up in trouble, then... So, it's got nothing to do with Kyousuke-kun!"

Maina's explanation was not very coherent, but she was trying her very best.

"...Maina?"

Kyousuke could not help but look at Maina's face. Dragged by the neck, Maina had her mouth in a horizontal line while staring firmly at Kurumiya to express her opinion.

"...I see. In other words, you are the cause of the whole thing? In that case, you are the one causing Kamiya trouble, so you'll need to be disciplined even harsher... Even that is fine with you, Igarashi?"

"Ooh... No problem! Resolve... I have it!"

"Hoh? Really? ...Hmph. Very well, I will grant your wish to receive a good loving."

"Umm... Hey!? Hold on, Maina--"

Kyousuke's violent voice was held back by Maina's firm eyes of resolve.

Staring straight into his eyes, displaying tense lips, she conveyed her thoughts clearly.

--Shut up.

"I am prepared... It's all my fault."

With tears and the blood splatter remaining on her face, Maina smiled in an intangible manner.

Self-mockery and resignation. The clumsy smile conveying these emotions turned out to be this fragile.

Her expression stood in stark contrast to her eyes, causing Kyousuke to feel he must speak. But before he could do so--

"...Suits me fine. Then allow me to have a good look at your resolve? I guess it will probably take some time, so... Kukuku. Kamiya, return to the classroom and self-study."

"Self-study? By self-study, you mean--"

"Doing nothing at all. If you cause any more trouble for me today, I will discipline everyone together. My anger meter is almost about to explode... I'll first vent some of it on this girl here. Come!"

"Ooh!? M-M-M-M-Me!? I-Iyahhhhhhhhh!"

Kurumiya turned and left, dragging Maina off to disappear into the depths of the school building.

By the time Kyousuke noticed, the medical team were already placing the wounded onto stretchers to carry them away. At this moment, Kyousuke--

"....."

Silently, he clutched the handkerchief he had missed the chance to return.

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"...Maina."

Lunch break. Kyousuke finally resolved himself and spoke to Maina who had just returned.

Sitting limp in her seat, Maina was staring off into space.

"----"

...No response. From top to bottom, she resembled thoroughly spent fuel.

Her outer garment was changed. There were band-aids and gauze on her face, she did not look like she had suffered much external injury, but there seemed to be significant trauma to the depths of her soul.

"I'm so sorry for being born." "My secret hole is exhausted from play." "I'll never be married off now." "No! Turning into a rag!" Etc etc.

Losing light in her eyes, she kept muttering as though in a dream.

...What had happened in the punishment room?

Looking at the totally changed Maina, Kyousuke felt a sharp pain in his heart and was struck by an idea.

This time, he placed his hand on Maina's shoulder.

"--Hey, I'm gonna discipline you, 'kay?"

He tried to make a high-pitched voice.

"Eh!? S-S-S-S-Sorry! Please, no more... Ooh?"

She seemed to react to the word 'discipline'. Maina's body shook and regained her senses.

Maina and Kyousuke made eye contact. The instant she realize it was not Kurumiya, her body lost all strength. However, she immediately scowled and pushed Kyousuke's hand aside.

"I said don't come near me! Please don't touch me... You'll get hurt too! Even worse, y-you might get killed! So please don't come near me. Please don't talk to me! Like the others..."

Watching Maina hugging herself, shaking, the classmates kept their distance. No one intended to approach.

Maina's clumsiness, independent of her own will, could be considered something like a bomb.

Once you got involved with her, if you handled it purely, you could very well get caught up in it.

Kyousuke also stayed on guard himself, but even so--

"Here... Maina, you dropped this, right?"

Still making a nonchalant expression, he extended the pink handkerchief to her.

Maina went "...Ah" in surprise, her eyes widened. Timidly, she received the handkerchief with both hands. After examining it in detail, she looked up at Kyousuke in puzzlement.

Looking at her with her head tilted adorably in surprise, Kyousuke smiled and said:

"Also, thank you for just now. Thank you for protecting me from Kurumiya..."

"Eh!? Oh, umm... It was my fault to begin with. It's not really protecting or anything..."

While she hugged the handkerchief, her face took on a light shade of pink just like the fabric.

Seeing Maina smile, Kyousuke prepared to cut straight to the main point.

"Either way, it's thanks to you that I was saved. So, umm... I was thinking of treating you to lunch as thanks. It also happens to be the lunch break now."

Although calling it treating, all he had were exchangeable meal coupons. It was simply the best he could do given the circumstances.

"Eh? Lunch... B-But, I... Umm, uh..."

"Oh, don't worry about your clumsiness, okay? Besides, I am the number one murderer in this class so I won't get killed so easily. Or are you saying you don't wanna? You don't wanna eat with a murderer like me?"

Hearing Kyousuke, Maina leaked out a "...Ooh."

Taking advantage of Maina's dislike of the surroundings and the fact that he was a murderer, Kyousuke used it in reverse to achieve his goal, posing a question with full knowledge that Maina was unable to refute him. This method made Kyousuke find himself very underhanded.

In actual fact, Maina was cornered, going "...Auau" awkwardly.

--However, this was enough. Last time and also slightly earlier, Maina was like this too.

When saying "don't come near me", Maina looked very lonely, very sad...

Her true feelings of if reality permits, I actually want to be with others' were conveyed genuinely.

--Isn't this only natural? Kyousuke believed.

Suddenly thrown in this kind of place, expecting to be calm and unafraid would be unrealistic.

Although she had murdered others due to clumsiness, Maina was just an ordinary girl.

"Hey Maina. Let's have lunch with us today? After all, you didn't get to eat much yesterday either, right? You won't last if this continues every day."

"Ueh!? H-How did you know...?"

"Why...? Of course it's because you're afraid, right? Surrounded by murderers everywhere, a girl like you, Maina, could get attacked any time. --However, with the number one murderer of the class, me, by your side, those guys won't dare approach rashly, right? You can be more at least together with me, right?"

Seeing Kyousuke smile, Maina's gaze began to wander.

"B-But... Umm... What if Kyousuke-kun attacks me, then what should I--"

"No need to worry."

Suddenly, Eiri interrupted. She turned around from her seat in front.

"If that happens, I'll... cut him."

"You'll cut me where!? You threw a glance just now, right? I'm absolutely sure you glanced at it!?"

"...So noisy. Shut up. Watch out or I shave away that thing of yours that's like a burdock root."

"It's not that small in girth, okay!? And man, I can't believe you're shaving it... That thought alone is enough to make it almost retract back inside!?"

"...Yeah yeah yeah. Retracting makes little difference anyway. After all, it's your junk."

"What do you mean by my junk!? It's not like you've seen it before, what are you basing these comments on!? Watch out or I'll sue you for defamation."

"...Oh really? Forcing someone to see something they are unwilling to see--Then I'll sue you for sexual harassment. Watch out or I'll cut it off and throw it away, your little twig."

"I have no intention of doing that! And somehow, it feels like you made it even smaller!"

"...Hey Maina."

Ignoring Kyousuke whose emotions were running amok, Eiri turned her gaze towards Maina.

Eiri's half-closed eyes conveyed a murderous gaze as usual.

As expected, Maina went "Eeeeek!?" and became frightened for real.

"What's with this response... It's the same at yesterday's lunch break too, right? I don't get you."

Eiri pouted unhappily.

--Speaking of which, so Eiri invited Maina yesterday?

She must have thought, since both of them were girls and sat close to each other, they should interact a bit.

But things did not go according to plan. Perhaps due to Maina's unusual timidness, Eiri was a bit miffed.

"...So what's the conclusion? Are you coming or not?"

"Awuwu... U-Umm... I, uh..."

"Hey Maina... You feel guilty about your crimes, right? Then just think of this as punishment and come with us."

Eiri spoke lightly in her usual tone of voice.

Carrying substance that could not be ignored, it served as the decisive blow.

"Punishment... I-I see. Okay... Since you've gone to such lengths to convince me, please allow me to join you."

Despite still feeling a bit troubled, Maina nodded.

"......Good. I understand."

Seeing this, Eiri's expression relaxed slightly. Her rust-red eyes also showed joy.

However, when Eiri noticed Kyousuke's gaze, she instantly turned back to her cold expression.

"Hmph... Then hurry and get going? Someone else is waiting."

Eiri turned her face away gloomily and stood up from her seat.

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In a certain student cafeteria, roughly twice the size of a classroom, many students were gathered. A lively scene.

There were gangster-like boys with tattoos on their shoulders and also modest-looking boys with black-rimmed glasses.

There were girls with extremely brightly colored dyed hair and someone massive in all respected, like Bob Sapp--

"Geh!?" Kyousuke desperately tried to hide.

"...Hey, what are you doing so suddenly?"

"Hmm? Uh, sorry... There's a student I really don't want to face."

"...Really? You've made an enemy so soon after school started? It must be tough being the top celebrity in the class."

Kyousuke talked while hiding behind Eiri's back. During this time, Bob slowly walked out of the cafeteria.

Surviving one crisis for now, Kyousuke readjusted his mind and looked around.

"So... Where did that girl go--Oh. Found her, found her."

Instantly, he found his target.

Holding a tray, Kyousuke made a beeline for the girl in the black gas mask, standing next to four seats by a window. Even among the students with very distinctive appearances, she was still extremely striking.

"Hi, Renko! Sorry I'm late."

"....."

Kyousuke made conversation, but there was no response.

Looking at the side of Renko's face while she remained perfectly still, Kyousuke cocked his head.

Listening closely, from the gas mask--no, from the black headphones on the edge of the gas mask--there were shaka-shaka sounds leaking. She was probably listening to music.

Thinking that, Kyousuke was just about to pat Renko on the shoulder.

"Hmm? Oh, isn't this Kyousuke? Sorry sorry. The volume was too high so I didn't hear you."

Noticing Kyousuke's arrival, Renko adjusted the headphone's control.

The shaka-shaka sounds became smaller, small enough to be inaudible.

"No problem... By the way, what kind of music are you listening to?"

"What do I listen to? Basically hardcore punk. Like GMK48 where the entire band wears gas masks, all forty-eight members. The heaviness of the sound is really quite something."

"True dat... Say, that's a band, right? What instruments do they use?"

"Guitar, bass, drums, percussion instruments and samplers. Also, there's one vocalist."

"Just one!? So many band members and there's just one vocalist!? Won't his voice get drowned out completely!?"

"Shuko... I hope you won't underestimate the vocalist, Kyousuke. Just because there are merely forty-seven other people playing instruments drowning him out, you think that he can't produce a gentle sound? Sheesh, that's so rude!"

"I-I see Sorry... Eh? Ara? Wait a sec. From the tone of your voice, it seems like the band's vocalist can't be heard, am I being oversensitive? Hey..."

--Shaka shaka shaka shaka.

"Don't turn the volume up! Rather, turn the music off, okay?"

"No! I can't stay calm normally unless I'm listening to music. Whether chatting, having meals, attending class... No music, no life. Foosh."

"Eh. You've been playing songs all this time? How much do you love music, really?"

"...Shouldn't it be no mask, no life, instead?"

Eiri spoke coldly on the frowning Kyousuke's behalf.

Accepting the sharp retort, Renko loudly greeted "...Oh, it's Eiri!"

"Speaking of which, you're here too! Oh my~ It's been so long since I last ate together with others, this is so exciting... Say, who's the girl over there?"

Renko pointed to beside Kyousuke. The gas mask tilted along with her head.

"Eeeek!?" Maina emitted a brief scream and hugged Kyousuke's arm. While her arms were wrapped tightly around him, Kyousuke felt a soft sensation. Despite Maina's short stature, she was unexpectedly "stacked."

While squishing that pair of things tightly, Maina's teeth chattered as she trembled.

"T-T-T-T-T-That person's face is so mecha! Isn't she a robot!?"

"Yes. You're very knowledgeable... That's right, I am a robot. Although I used to be a beautiful girl, an evil, secret association did this and that, toying with my body, finally making demonic modifications to turn me into a killing machine with neither blood nor tears, a tragic heroine! My boobs can even shoot with ion cannons!"

Yeah right, who would actually believe those things can be used to attack?

"Ehhhhhhhhhhhh!? For real!? A-Amazing..."

--Maina seemed to be taken in very easily, biting her fingertip in admiration.

"For real, it seems that many things have been stuffed into the body. So much energy... Although the face is mechanized and looks very hard, your body still seems extremely soft... Amazing."

Maina's eyes were glimmering brightly as though she had seen something incredible.

Completely ignoring the wryly smiling Kyousuke who was going "no, that's not a face but a gas mask... the face is underneath", Eiri suddenly said a monotonous "Yeah" and quickly sat down.

...Her thoughts were easily read.

Glancing sideways at Eiri's ironing board of a chest, Kyousuke hastily sat down in the seat opposite to Renko.

After some hesitation, Maina took the last empty spot--the seat on Kyousuke's right--and slowly sat down.

"Is it a little late for self-introductions? Nice to meet you, I am Hikawa Renko! Year 1 Class B. My charm points are big, bright, clear eyes, long eye lashes, a high bridge of a nose and sexy lips."

"Ah, yes! Umm... I am Igarashi Maina. P-Pleased to meet you..."

Probably due to nervousness, Maina bowed her head and her gaze wandered.

Then after observing Maina for a while, Renko stared at Kyousuke silently.

"----"

Due to the gas mask covering up her face, it was impossible to tell what Renko was trying to convey.

"...Umm, Renko, what's up with you? It's very frightening if you stare at me without saying anything."

"My charm points are big, bright, clear eyes, long eye lashes, a high bridge of a nose and sexy lips, you know?"

"Yeah, I heard you just now. I wasn't planning on inserting a punchline, but now that you repeated it, sounding so lonely, I'm getting a headache."

"You're welcome? I totally don't mind, Kyousuke... if you're the one doing the inserting..."

"Don't say 'inserting' in such an awkward manner, okay!? That's so tempting, I actually might do it!"

"Yes, it's fine... Come on, baby? However, I hope you won't go too hard, please be gentle--"

"Like I said, stop talking in this manner!"

Kyousuke stood up and screamed as hard as he could.

"...Sigh." Sitting diagonally opposite to him, Eiri sighed pretentiously.

"...A husband and wife comedy routine? Seeing how you two are so into it, looks like we're in the way."

Throwing these words down, Eiri picked up her chopsticks and ate some vegetables. Her expression reading "yuck", she began to frown. Then putting down her chopsticks in displeasure, she sipped the miso soup. Her exquisite eyebrows moved in a frown as though saying "...this crap tastes absolutely disgusting."

Before Eiri's mood could get any worse from the cafeteria's signature dish "overnight leftovers set meal", Kyousuke frantically waved his hands.

"You're not in the way, Eiri! As long as you're here, how should I put it...? It feels like there's tension in the air? Like nervousness, pressure, stress, a very heavy kinda..."

"Hmm? You're not really helping, you know?"

"Shut up, gas mask. You're the one who's not helping. Don't attack your own side, dummy."

"Yes, that's right. My role is not the punchline but to play the fool--In other words, I am the one on the receiving end."

"Why are you deliberately talking like that again!? You just want to say you're on the receiving end, don't you? You perverted mask!"

"......Sigh, I'm leaving."

"Huh!? Wait, Eiri! It's my bad. Don't leave."

"Listen to him, Eiri! We haven't started getting all chummy yet! I really wanna be good friends with you, so don't go... Please! Like this, like this!"

Eiri had already lifted her tray and started standing up. Renko begged while pressing her boobs together.

--What the heck kind of 'like this' is that? Normally, people beg by pressing their palms together.

"......Ugh."

However, the effect was very potent. Staring at Renko, Eiri's face twitched.

Seeing her pure flat chest and comparing it to Renko's breasts that were further emphasized by the squeezing, she could not find any words.

"I-I get it, sheesh... I'm not leaving, okay... Sigh."

Eiri sat down again as though her whole being collapsed.

Renko hugged Eiri who became depressed from staring at her chest intently.

"Wow, thank you, Eiri! I won't let you go ever again. Foosh."

"...Huh? This is so annoying, don't lean in so close. It's touching me, your two lumps of useless fat!"

Eiri pushed the gas mask away with her elbows while glaring at Renko's chest in annoyance.

Putting up a pose like she was very shocked, Renko clutched her head in an exaggerated manner and froze.

"Shuko..." Renko's shoulders slowly slumped and she muttered regretfully:

"I was thinking I'd finally get the chance for the two of us to cultivate our chest--wrong, cultivate our love... But I ended up getting dumped. This sadness, busting up my heart... Goosh."

You're really going to fire up Eiri's killing intent if you change "filling up" to "busting up"...

But before Kyousuke could get a word in, Renko suddenly looked up.

"But I won't give up! Making a sad face will only infect others with gloom, so... It's necessary to smile when feeling sad. As long as I show a cheerful smile, I'll definitely bring smiles to everyone. That's what I truly believe..."

Putting her hands together as though praying, Renko spoke words to great fervor.

But since the gas mask completely hid what lay beneath, talking about faces and expressions was totally pointless.

Although there were so many wrong things to point out, Kyousuke knew he would simply get led by the nose by Renko if he tried to throw in snide remarks so he decided to lay low... Besides, he did not want to provoke Eiri and further.

Kyousuke focused on eating his "overnight leftover udon noodles."

"...Hmm. Ignoring me? Ignoring me huh? Fine, be that way, then I'll ignore you and eat my own lunch! Then I'll grow bigger and bigger. But only bigger in the chest. Shuko!"

Miffed by Kyousuke focusing on eating and ignoring her, Renko spewed flames of anger.

Feeling Eiri's intent gaze, Renko took out something from her schoolbag behind her.

Kyousuke looked up in surprise to see Renko taking out a certain slender, black, tubular object, placing it on the table.

"...Hmm? What's that?"

Ignoring the curious Kyousuke in revenge, Renko searched through her schoolbag again. This time, she took out three packs of jelly drinks in silver packaging.

" " "..." " "

This was apparently Renko's lunch.

While everyone watched, Renko linked the black tube to the connector on gas mask's right side.

Then she inserted the other end into the straw entry of the opened jelly drink.

"Slurp... Slurp... Slurp slurp..."

Slurping away to eat the contents, it was like usinga straw to eat jelly.

"You don't take off this gas mask even when you're eating!? How insistent are you!?"

Kyousuke could not help but throw in a snide comment. Renko laughed "foosh."

"Oh no, I'd like to take it off too, but I can't even if I wanted to."

"Hmm? ...It's not because you don't want to take it off, but you can't? What do you mean--"

"It's not that outrageous and it's no big deal. Even in the dorms, I don't take it off."

After drinking the first pack, Renko opened the second pack's lid and replied.

Her firm tone of voice conveyed clearly that she neither wanted nor permitted anyone to dig deeper into this matter. Kyousuke shut up.

After shutting up, Kyousuke suddenly noticed something.

He knew absolutely nothing about this gas mask-wearing girl.

Why she was enrolled in this school was obvious, but even how many she had killed was currently unknown--

"...Oh right right. Say, Maina."

Before Kyousuke could ask his question, Renko looked towards Maina.

Suddenly called by name, Maina trembled, causing her cutlery to rattle.

"W-What!? S-S-S-S-Something's up!?"

She had been silently carving up her "overnight leftovers hamburg steak" with her knife and fork which now stopped, suspended over thep late, shaking uncontrollably.

"...Hmm?" Renko cocked her head and slurped her jelly.

"Nothing, you just look very nervous. I think it's fine to be a little quiet when adjusting to the atmosphere here, but... You're still not used to it, right?"

"Eh!? Umm... Au, umm... S-Sowwee... Sowwee!"

"Foosh. No need to be so nervous. Despite how I look, I won't suddenly go licking, groping and sucking all over you. Yes, unlike Kyousuke."

"Hey. Don't go talking like I'll grope, lick and suck."

"...Oya, am I wrong? If Kyousuke's the one, I totally don't mind if the above actions were done to me."

"For reals!?" Kyousuke took the bait.

"Shuko..." Renko sighed.

"...See? I knew he wanted to do it in his inner thoughts. Such serious eyes.... See that, Maina? This is Kamiya Kyousuke's true nature. Rather than a carnivorous male, he's a legendary man of lust."

Renko covered her breasts and shrank back. Eiri took this opportunity to throw in a "...what human scum."

Kyousuke really wanted to retort back "don't go concurring at these kinds of moments."

"You girls are really having fun making up all this nonsense. But it's all a joke. Don't take it so serious--"

"Eeeeek!? Don't look at me! W-w-w-w-w-what will I do if I get pregnant!? So immoral! Too unclean! Too shameless!!"

"Yes yes, you're very right. The legend of twelve girls getting raped by those "In Utero" eyes, which can cause pregnancy with a single look, is absolutely true. Kamiya Kyousuke... What a wicked bastard!"

"...The enemy of women. Better off dead."

"..."

Too exhausted to retort, Kyousuke stayed silent and continued eating his overnight leftover udon.

Just as its name implied, this udon tasted just as terrible as leftovers that had gone bad. Kyousuke naturally made a disgusted face.

"Oh no, Kyousuke, don't sulk. Did we go too far? Oh well, it's just to relieve the tension somewhat... So, next up is to cultivate love with Maina--"

--Whoosh!

At this moment, a silver flash flew past Kyousuke's view.

--Crash!

Suddenly, a hard object struck Renko's eyepiece then bounced away.

"...Ah." Maina leaked a sound.

Having finished eating and was just stretching, Eiri instantly became alert and leaned back. A silver flash flew past the vicinity of her neck.

Bounced off from Renko's mask, the deadly weapon--a silver table knife--fell on the floor with a clang.

Shock and silence descended.

"Ah... Umm... Just now, actually... My hand... hand slipped so, au..."

Kyousuke, Renko and Eiri's gaze of trepidation all locked onto one direction.

Face gone pale, Maina continued to keep her right hand in a knife-holding posture, frozen in midair.

Kyousuke could be heard gulping.

"Maina, just now... You, threw that knife, huh?"

"Eeeee!? S-S-S-Sowwee! I-I didn't do it on purpose..."

--Whoosh! Another silver flash flew by with great force.

"Uwah! T-That was close..."

Kyousuke reflexively dodged the fork that suddenly flew at him when Maina turned towards him.

The three-pronged deadly weapon went straight for his eyeball. Kyousuke twisted his neck and dodged just barely... But at that kind of speed and distance, it still scraped off a thin layer of skin. Kyousuke broke out in terrified cold sweat.

"Ahhhhhhhh!? J-Just now was n-n-n-n-n-not on purpose either! ...Awawawawa."

"You!? I know! I know, so calm down--Woahhhhh!?"

--Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

In a total state of panic, Maina's hand, still holding the fork, kept stabbing fiercely at Kyousuke mercilessly as though she had aimed beforehand. The aimed target was always a vulnerable spot--the eye.

"...Huff... Huff... I thought I was a goner..."

After a hard and terrible struggle, Kyousuke finally managed to wrestle the deadly weapon away from her. Kyousuke and Maina were all covered in sweat. Arms raised, Maina was crying a storm while apologizing:

"Sob sob... S-Sorry! I didn't... Sniff... do it on purpose..."

"Y-Yeah... I know, okay! I know, so relax. Just calm down first, Maina? See, I'm not hurt... Just sit down first. Calm down. --Okay?"

"O-Okay... Sowwee... Sniff... Sob."

Maina sat down, wiping her tears. Kyousuke finally breathed a sigh of relief.

Finally at ease, Renko and Eiri exchanged glances.

"...Ooh~, what was that just now? I was attacked directly. If it weren't for this mask, my eye would have been right in the trajectory? I'll definitely be blinded."

"...Honestly, that was very close. Although the force was much weaker after the ricochet, if I hadn't reacted in time, the consequences would have been severe. I see now... This is deadly clumsiness."

"Clumsiness?" Seeing Eiri rest her chin on her hand, Renko showed puzzlement.

"Yeah. That's right, it's clumsiness. Maina has no intention of harming or killing her targets. However--"

"No, let me... I'm fine already, Kyousuke-kun."

Maina stopped Kyousuke just as he was about to explain to Renko.

Looking up from her handkerchief, blowing her nose, Maina smiled weakly:

"So I'll explain myself... About this clumsiness."

In a contrite tone of voice, Maina quietly, slowly, began to recount how she came to be sentenced to the Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation--about the homicide cases she had committed.

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Igarashi Maina's victims numbered three in total. Two deaths by bludgeoning and one death by eating.

The first victim was Maina's classmate. After eating a mouthful of the packed lunch Maina prepared, he instantly choked. Thrown into a panic, Maina's clumsiness activated repeatedly.

Inside the classroom during lunch break, a destructive hurricane began to swirl--in the end, including teachers who had rushed over at the news, there were eight casualties in total. Among them, the deaths of two girls rendered it an unprecedented tragedy.

During this time, the boy who started with eating from the lunchbox also died, frothing at the mouth.

"All I made was ordinary food..." Maina testified. Nothing toxic was found in the fried egg that had become the cause of death although it was confirmed to contain an extremely stimulatory component.

In other words, Maina's lunch had killed the boy when in the instant he swallowed the fried egg, the absolutely unimaginable stimulation trampled his digestive system, causing death by fright--"death by eating."

In fact, researchers proceeded to use samples from Maina's lunchbox for experiments with lab rats, resulting in a threatening record of 90% death rate. This was no longer food but a poison.

The symptoms varied depending on the type of food, but included abnormal sweating, vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, heart attacks, finally developing full body paralysis or epilepsy. After countless experiments, the cause still could not be found. Apart from Maina, using the same materials and cooking with the same steps, no one could reproduce the results.

Hence, Maina obtained a fearsome and notorious nickname, the clumsy girl of disaster, Black Pandora.

After these developments, Maina was exiled to this school.

--After hearing Maina's story, Kyousuke's first reaction was:

"...Oh my, that's so unbelievable. Especially the terrible cooking part."

After all, this sort of thing was really too absurd. However--

"I'm not lying... It's true, it's all true."

A sob came from Maina who had her head deeply bowed. The sound of tears splashing, the fist trembling on her knee, everything was pleading the truthfulness of her words.

"So, don't come near me... It's very dangerous! I don't want to hurt anyone... Or kill anyone. Sorry. Getting involved with me is definitely not a good thing--"

"Hmm. Actually, there's no need to worry in particular, you know?"

Cutting Maina off, Renko spoke indifferently.

"Yes. I knew I should stay alone--Ehhhhhhhhhhh!?"

Maina's depressed face instantly bounced up and turned towards Renko.

"Because, isn't it just because you're not good at cooking? Besides, you didn't do it on purpose, right? Sometimes you make dangerous blunders, but now that we know that's the way you are, Maina, we can handle it more or less. Even though we were frightened just now because we didn't know."

"No, although that sounds simple... But it's not really something that's solved completely after knowing about it"

Kyousuke frowned while Eiri went "...hmph" and scoffed.

"...How foolish, Kyousuke. Know that a murder weapon only poses a threat when concealed. If you know from the start that the other person is holding a knife, you can flee or stay on guard, right? When facing a deadly weapon, people become sharp. That's why murder weapons must be hidden as much as possible, then you close in... and suddenly make your move. Only that way is it scary. In other words, the first strike is the most dangerous. Got that? Conversely, the second strike and subsequent attacks are basically nothing... As long as you're alert."

Hearing Eiri's rare, long-winded explanation, Renko nodded in agreement.

"Yes yes. As expected of Eiri! I understand very well. So, I believe you don't need to be so worried and on edge, Kyousuke. Maina making clumsy blunders cannot be avoided but we'll try our best to help Maina not to commit blunders. According to what Eiri said just now, basically just stay alert."

"Yeah... I see now. You both make a good point, perhaps it's doable..."

--Kyousuke knew about Maina already.

He knew what kinds of disasters Maina's clumsiness could cause and what dangers could arise... But when talking to Renko and Eiri, as his mood relaxed, he very well could lower his guard against Maina's clumsiness.

If Maina's nervousness could be relieved, then perhaps there won't be a need to pace about in needless worry.

Having experienced last time and this time's incident, the timing of Maina's deadly clumsiness was most likely triggered when her nervous emotions reached a critical point. Kyousuke thought.

Don't relax my guard towards Maina, huh... I have to keep this in mind.

"Sob sob... But this is still very dangerous, umm... I-In the end..."

Maina looked down again, indecisively pressing her index fingers together.

She must be thinking about being rejected.

Maina felt doubtful about Kyousuke and the rest's responses. Seeing the troubled Maina, Eiri smiled wryly.

"Say... Speaking of dangerous, aren't everyone around you dangerous? The others--those who keep their weapons or madness hidden, they're way more dangerous and far more worrying... Isn't that so?"

Eiri's sharp gaze penetrated Renko.

The girl with the unknown background, wearing a black gas mask, not only accepted Eiri's prickly gaze but also laughed "foosh" in confident composure.

"Yes, that's right. I agree with Eiri... By the way, my deadly weapon is very obvious, right? --Especially Kyousuke, he's fallen victim to me many times already."

"...Huh? Me? By you? You must be joking, Renko...?"

Kyousuke had not noticed at all. Was it possible to be killed without any awareness at all?

--Instantly, a wave of fear went past his spine.

This gas mask, where was the deadly weapon hidden...

"Foosh. You still don't get it? My deadly weapon is--"

"....."

Kyousuke, Maina and even Eiri gulped, waiting for Renko to reveal the answer.

Under everyone's gaze, Renko slowly crossed her arms.

"--My chest. Making the target die of blood loss from nosebleeding, burying their face into my bosom to suffocate them... In other words, my irresistible charms. Don't be surprised, I am the Busty Murderer!"

Shaking her bountiful bosom and deadly weapon, Renko proudly lifted her chest.

"...Liar." "...Must be lying."

Kyousuke and Eiri's retorts were quite in agreement.

Instantly, Kyousuke heard laughter from beside him.

Maina looked quite happy. Tears appearing at the corners of her eyes, Maina noticed Kyousuke and everyone's gazes and went "...ah" in surprise. Back to her senses, she awkwardly said:

"Umm, uh... Everyone is so interesting."

Her cheeks dyed pink, a shade of shyness was added.

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"But I was thinking... Big is not always better. It makes my shoulders sore and gets in the way when moving about, also, I can't wear many kinds of cute underwear... There's a lot of inconveniences if I count them. I guess someone who doesn't have these won't understand? I'm so jealous of you, Eiri... Shuko."

"...What are you laughing at? If you're that jealous, want my help in cutting them off?"

"Eh!? No way, I am the giant boobs character! Without these boobs, my characterization would be broken and Kyousuke won't be able to get it up!"

"Shut up! Even with your boobs gone, your personality still won't be overshadowed, stop worrying."

"...Right. There's nothing to worry about. Kyousuke is impotent to begin with."

"Impotent? What does impotent mean? Hmm... Is it the opposite of omnipotent?"

"The opposite of omnipotent is useless, Maina. Although there's no huge difference in truth."

"...Eh, I see. Impotent, useless, retarded, a poop machine that only makes trouble--"

"Stop saying anymore! You girls are making my life out to be totally worthless, okay!?"

--Exiting the cafeteria, they each went back to their respective class.

While the conversation was going on in the corridor, Kyousuke retorted as hard as he could.

Seeing the three girls get along so well together, Kyousuke sighed in relief and resignation.

(I'm the only one getting teased, that pisses me off so much.. But this is actually not bad. Maina's nervous mood seems to be soothed, basically. At this rate, things are going unexpectedly well.)

Glancing at the side of Maina's face while she was chatting and smiling, Kyousuke felt satisfied.

"Yahahhhhh! Yes yes! I finally found you! Yahaha!"

Just at this moment, a familiar high-pitched voice echoed across the first floor corridor in the old school building.

Just as Kyousuke's group passed by the door of an empty classroom, he slowly looked back.

Then just as expected--

"...Mohican. You've revived from the infirmary?"

Wrapped totally in bandages, the man with the red mohawk was standing there.

"Yahaha! Of course! I am immortal. Whether defeated ten, hundreds, thousands of times, I remain lively as ever! Yahahahaha!"

"...So noisy." Eiri grumbled as Mohican bragged.

No reading of the mood at all. Kyousuke's voice instantly lowered a notch.

"...What's up, Mohican? You got business with us?"

"Of course, that goes without saying! But before that, let me tell you this, fucker! You bastard, calling me whatever Mohican from the start, but my name is--"

"It's okay... Actually, we're not looking for you, Kamiya-san. Fufufu."

Just as Mohican was about to announce his name, three people wrapped in bandages emerged from around the corner. Big, medium, small--

"All we want is that bitch over there! I can't believe she made us suffer... As a payback, watch us give you some good loving. You should already expect reaping what you sow, right? Fuck!"

"H-Heehee... Of course in the sexual sense... Good punishment... H-Heeheehee..."

--Big and small, i.e. dreadlocks Oonogi and the hunchback Usami.

The two guys, thoroughly and painfully thrashed by Maina's clumsiness, were seeking revenge.

Feeling the overt hostility, Maina went "Eeeeek!?" and trembled.

"Last time, umm... Sorry! P-P-P-Please forgive me!"

"If saying sorry is enough, what's the point of having the police!? HUHHHHHH!?"

Mohican gave off terrifying vigor, looking as though he might charge any second.

"Eeeeeeek!?" Maina jumped with a scream. Standing beside her, Renko hugged her against her bosom.

"But you guys look like you've been under the police's care all this time until now, eh?"

Caressing Maina's shivering head, Renko calmly remarked snidely.

To be able to elicit snide remarks from Renko, Mohican truly lived up to his nature.

"Besides, why are you joining in? It's got nothing to do with you, Mohican."

"What? Wanna know? Then I'll tell you! My name is--"

"We met in the infirmary. Then we became great friends... He decided to pity us and join our side. Oh dear, what a kind man. Fufufu."

Mohican's attempt to announce his name was interrupted again. Under the bandages, Shinji's mouth relaxed.

However, his expression vanished instantly and in a cold, completely emotional voice, he said:

"...So everyone, could you be so kind as to step aside? Just as we said, we are only here for Maina-san. There's not much time left either... If you'll hand Maina-san to us, we will leave without a fuss and not harm anyone else. Is that agreeable?"

As he smiled gently towards Maina at the end, she jumped.

Looking at Shinji and the rest with those eyes wavering from fear and unease, she then looked at Kyousuke's group before lowering her gaze.

"...~~~~~!"

Still leaning against Renko's bosom, she closed her eyes tight.

Soon after, a very weak, trembling voice came from Maina.

"I-I get it... In that case, I'll obediently--"

"...Huh? What are you playint at? Is this a joke?"

Just as Maina left Renko and was about to walk towards Shinji's group, Eiri rapidly cut in. Her rust-red ponytail swaying, she cursed at them:

"Like anyone would listen to human scum like you? Can't you save your delusional speech for the coffin? If you dare touch a single finger of Maina's, I'll slaughter you all now."

Eiri interrupted with an annoyed face, casually giving out threats. Maina stared wide-eyed.

"Eiri-chan... W-Why...?"

"Foosh. It's obvious--because we're friends. I don't really understand the situation, but like anyone could watch Maina suffer so unreasonably without intervening... Yes, Eiri is so kind! Though she stole my spotlight!"

Renko sighed regretfully "shuko..."

"Eh? Eiri-chan..." Seeing Maina's watery eyes, Eiri hastily waved her hands.

"...It's nothing. This guys are just pissing me off. Don't get the wrong idea."

While Eiri answered calmly, Shinji stared at her in interest and licked his lips.

"Eh... How unexpected, Eiri-san. But if you insist on messing up our plans, you will get hurt, you know? Fufu... I've had my eyes on you early on, so let me say that you are greatly welcomed."

"Yeah. I super welcome her too, yo? The more resisting a girl, the more fun it is to subdue! And she's super hot. Breasts... are lacking, but whatever. I'm gonna fuck you up real good, yo!?"

"H-Heehee... Pitiful boobs, flat chest, cliff face, A cup... H-Heeheehee..."

"...You can all go to hell. I'm gonna slaughter you all."

Confronted with male students who were blinded by lust, Eiri lowered her voice.

"Slaughter? Eh, I don't mind, Eiri-chan... In fact, it's preferable."

"...What did you say? --What do you mean by that?"

Shinji's mockery caused all emotion to disappear from Eiri's voice.

Beneath the bandages, Shinji's face became more and more twisted.

"Exactly what the words say. Even though you've killed six victims, you're still just a weak girl, right? And you're unarmed right now. How do you intend to kill us? Go on and try it--"

"Yahahhhhhhhhhhh!"

At this moment, the door to the empty classroom suddenly opened with Mohican flying out.

He had apparently evaded Kyousuke and the other's gazes and moved inside the classroom.

Raising a chair up high, Mohican went for Maina directly.

"...Wha!? Crap--"

It goes without saying that Eiri could not respond, being out in front, but even Renko who was standing next to Maina did not react to the surprise attack, possibly due to the gas mask's blind spots.

"Eeeeeeeeek!?" Maina closed her eyes and clutched her head.

The heavy graffiti covered chair swung down--Just before that.

"Fly away."

"Huh!?"

With ears covered with piercings, the side of his face wrapped in bandages, Mohican was punched square in the face by Kyousuke.

Fresh blood and screams spurted out uncontrollably while Mohican flew away like a blob in an inexplicably comical manner.

Flying over Eiri, flying over Shinji, flying over Oonogi and Usami...

"Heedeff!?"

He landed on his head. Then his momentum sent him sliding down the corridor at great speed, sweeping trash and dust in his wake.

"Dawaba!?"

Suddenly shattering a door, a spectacular crash.

Clang clong! The sound of various objects falling and breaking inside the room. Amidst the white cloud of dust that remained hanging in the air, Mohican showed no signs of getting up.

" " "....." " "

Silence everywhere. Only Kyousuke relaxed his clenched fist and put it down.

Kyousuke exhaled "phew~..." lightly, moved his shoulder, shook his head, making cracking sounds and said:

"--Wanna fight, you bunch of murderers?"

He growled so deeply that he even surprised himself.

"Attacking on your own, getting beat up on your own... Then going on your own to find allies to get revenge as a group? Fuck this retarded nonsense. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? She's just a weak girl."

Shinji and the rest were staring at Mohican's final state, like a robot out of gas, not moving at all. Kyousuke turned around.

"A-Ahaha... S-So amazing, Kamiya-san! You saw it too, right? Maina-san isn't just a weak girl, she's just trying to kill off those who embarrass her, a cruel murderer, you know? Staying with someone like that, Kamiya-san, you'll get killed if you don't pay attention--"

--Crash! Kyousuke stepped on a chair that was rolling nearby, causing the smiling Shinji to shut up immediately.

Seeing the steel chair getting deformed and slowly flattening, Shinji put his smile away.

"...Like hell I'd get killed. Don't lump me in with fuckers like you guys. How can a murderer of twelve be killed by a mere girl? And fucker, you said Maina is a cruel murderer? Gimme a fucking break, willya?"

--That's right. Maina was not that kind of girl. Absolutely not.

She was just clumsier than the average person. Saying that she wants to kill off those who embarrassed her?

Ludicrous. Maina was not that kind of smart and calculating girl.

She is a clumsy but gentle girl. At least Kyousuke believed so firmly.

--Because.

"Do you know what's a truly cruel and fiendish murderer? ...You gotta reach my level before you can call someone that. Want me to demonstrate right here right now? So you'll know what's a true and authentic murderer."

Stepping on the chair, Kyousuke rested his arm against his knee, leaning forward, trying his best to be intimidating.

For the sake of getting Maina away from the threat of these murderers.

For the sake of making these guys stay away from her.

Kyousuke made use of the false charges that were forced upon him.

He glared harshly at Oonogi, Usami and Shinji's stiff faces.

"...If you don't wanna, get out of my sight. Stay away from Maina... Don't come near my friends. If you dare, then--"

Pouring forth as much murderous intent as he could...

He spoke as the Mass Murderer of Twelve.

"I'll massacre all of you without exception."

"...Ooh!?" "...Hee!?" "..."

The timid Oonogi, cowering Usami, and Shinji, who was staying silent with a bitter expression, all reacted to Kyousuke's words in surprise.

"K-Kyousuke-kun..." Maina began to space out. "...Scary." Eiri murmured softly.

Renko quietly laugh "foosh." Then--

"So..."

"...So?"

"SO COOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOL!"

Without them noticing, a large crowd of students had gathered to watch, looking at Kyousuke and the rest from afar.

Standing in the front row, Bob covered her face and screamed.

"Geh!? S-Shit... Did they just see everything--"

--By the time Kyousuke regained his senses, it was all too late.

Bob's scream broke the dead silence, causing the narrow corridor to erupt in applause and cheering.

Amidst the fervent cheers, Kyousuke stood blankly in the center. Renko placed a hand on his shoulder.

"Oh my~ Kyousuke. That was a splendid punch and such intimidation. As expected of the murderer who's the current hot topic! I can't believe everyone's heart has fallen victim to you in such short time... If I don't pay attention, I might fall for you too. Are you the Murderer of Maiden Hearts? Foosh."

Faced with Renko's teasing...

"Before that happens, I might fall victim to those psychos... Not my heart but my body."

Glancing sideways at the fervent and rowdy murderers, Kyousuke whispered in a quiet and exhausted voice.

(Say, that Mohican fucker turns out to be super weak... His body is so light. I can't believe I blew him away without even trying. It made me look like I'm ridiculously strong... Fuck.)

Thanks to that, things got even more troublesome.

As Kyousuke imagined his school life here on, his shoulders slumped completely.

# Period 4 - Rusty Nail, Rusty Heart / "Smells Like Rotten Blood"

Q. What are the recommended menu items in the cafeteria and snack shop?

A. The "overnight leftover set meal and "today's leftover bread." The main ingredients are vegetable stems and the fatty part of meat. Originally supposed to be disarded as kitchen trash, they are now recycled and reused. Quite environmentally friendly... As for me? Today, I'm eating a chateaubriand steak made from domestic Wagyuu beef. Like hell I'd eat the hogwash you assholes eat. Makes me wanna puke!

# Smells Like Rotten Blood
# ラスティネイル・ラスティハート

## 四時間目

**Q** 食堂や購買のおすすめメニューは？

**A** 《日替わり残飯定食》と《今日の残パン》だ。主な材料は、野菜の芯や肉の脂身。本来ならば生ゴミとして捨てられるモノを、再利用しているんだな。エコだエコ。……わたし？　本日わたしが食べるのは、国産和牛のシャトーブリアンステーキだよ。貴様らブタのエサなど食えるか。反吐が出る！

"...The country is in ruins, but hills and streams remain / Grass and trees prosper as spring comes again--"

Kurumiya flipped the pages of the textbook slowly with her left hand while reading out poetry, her right hand tapping a steel pipe against her shoulder, meanwhile pacing slowly in the classroom. Although the classroom was shrouded in a tense atmosphere as usual, recently, the situation would ease up depending on conditions.

Probably in the five days since Kyousuke and the others started school, everyone had started to get used to life in this Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation. Ordinary as he was, Kyousuke was no exception.

"--Flowers spatter tears when hard times dominate / Birds alarm the heart that hates to separate..."

When Kurumiya walked past Kyousuke, she glanced at him for an instant. However, Kyousuke's heart was still basically calm. Kurumiya was a teacher too and did more than just disciplining.

Apart from students who pushed Kurumiya's buttons multiple times a day (basically Mohican) and got disciplined, the peaceful progress in the lessons was surprising.

The graffiti art occasionally entering into view, the classmates' glaring eyes, Kurumiya's absurd behavior that was akin to surprise attacks--apart from all this, life in the classroom was basically the same as it was for Kyousuke in middle school...

"...Yawn."

Eiri yawned, looking like she was about to fall asleep. It was understandable.

Also, the system in the Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation was that each teacher was responsible for teaching every subject to their homeroom class. Evaluated simply as an educator, Kurumiya was indeed quite excellent.

Hitting all the key points yet progressing from the basics to the indepth, her instruction was pouring knowledge into Kyousuke's mind like a steady stream of water.

The distinctive lolita voice also sounded very cute and pleasant to the ears.

"...For three months beacon fires have continued to hold / A letter from home now is worth its weight in gold--"

Listening to Chinese poet Du Fu's "Spring Propsect", Kyousuke looked at the ticking clock on the wall to check the time.

(Ten minutes until school's out for the day... huh)

Recently, there was something that troubled Kyousuke as soon as it crossed his mind, tormenting him

It was caused by the letters currently stuffed in Kyousuke's pocket.

Letters written to him that Kyousuke had discovered in his shoe locker this morning. Written in round, girly handwriting with heart shapes, this was precisely the root cause of the evil threatening Kyousuke's peace.

"--Scratching my grey hair has made it grow so thin / There's hardly enough to support a hairpin..."

Feeling Kurumiya's mumbling voice gradually grow distant, Kyousuke clenched his fist tightly.

The last death struggle of the day still remained. Again, failure was forbidden.

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"Kamiya-kun... Having killed twelve people, you..."

After school, in a deserted place behind the gym, Kyousuke went to meet a girl.

Sleek long black hair. Pale skin like light snow. An upperclassman in the second year, she hugged him, wrapping her arms around Kyousuke's waist from behind, twisting her body shyly.

Beneath long fluttering eyelashes, her adorable eyes stared at Kyousuke, inviting tender affection.

She took a deep breath as though to resolve herself, her face blushing as red as an apple.

"I love you! So, please... Let's pierce each other's heart with our love!"

Exposing her inner thoughts...

She took out the survival knife hidden behind her and lunged for Kyousuke's throat.

"Uwahhhhhh!? I-I'm sorry!"

--Whack. Kyousuke dodged the surprise attack at the last second, punching her in the gut.

"Ooph." The senior moaned passionately before collapsing with supreme bliss and ecstasy on her face.

Kyousuke caught her body while wiping cold sweat from his brow.

--That was totally too close. He had lowered his guard just because she was his senior. Clearly second-year already, shouldn't she be reformed already? And why is she carrying a knife...

"...Ara? You rejected another one? But clearly quite a hottie this time."

Just as Kyousuke rested the unconscious upperclassman on the floor, Renko emerged from a dead angle of the gym.

Soon after, Eiri and Maina also made their appearances. Eiri was gnashing her teeth while Maina applauded, going "Kyousuke-kun is so popular. Amazing!"

Kyousuke sighed deeply and stood up.

"I care more about personality than appearances, okay... Even if I'm popular with a bunch of psychos, this doesn't make me happy at all."

In the three days after the commotion last time, Kyousuke was getting confessions from girls one after another.

A total of ten. Averaging more than three a day, his era of super popularity with the ladies had finally descended. However, since they were all convicted murderers without exception, their methods of confession were totally nuts as well.

"I want to know everything about Kamiya-san." Almost dissected.

"Let me eat Kamiya-kun... To become one flesh." Kyousuke was pushed down by someone with no light in her eyes.

"I really want to hang you up as home decoration." Crazy courtship from a girl wielding a saw in one hand.

Then there were Bob's massive crying from getting dumped, turning into an uncontrollable human tank. Kyousuke fled for dear life while Bob half-destroyed part of the school...

Absolutely terrible.

Letting Renko and the girls stay at the confession scene was also for insurance. Even though things hadn't gotten to the point where it was necessary to lean on their help, Kyousuke knew it was just a matter of time.

"At this rate, I definitely won't make it... I'll definitely get killed."

Exhausted physically and mentally, Kyousuke clutched and bowed his head.

Renko crossed her arms in thought and pointed an index finger at the side of her face.

"You're rejecting every single girl... Compared to the body, your mind must be closer to the limit, right? But since you're so popular, there's nothing we could do... Oh, right!"

Very quickly, Renko clapped her hands together as though inspired with a good idea.

"You're getting confessions because you're single! In other words, once you get a girlfriend, the confessions will stop! ...Right? Don't you think it's a great idea? Foosh."

"Not gonna work. I don't have someone to go out with."

If there's someone to go out with, I'd simply go with it, but these girls are all dangerous psychos.

"Hmm? Aren't you overlooking something, Kyousuke? High quality lover candidates, take a look... Aren't there three right here!?"

Turning towards Eiri and Maina, Renko spread her arms in an introductory gesture.

Hearing that, Eiri went "...Huh? Like I'd want that" and rejected on the spot.

Maina also went "Eh!? K-Kyousuke-kun's girlfriend!? No way for sure... Umm... How should I put it, umm... Sorry!" and shyly bowed her head.

Despite not being the one confessing, Kyousuke somehow felt like he was getting dumped.

"...Oi, Renko. How are you going to make it up to me for hurting my feelings like this?"

Perhaps suffering a blow to his self-esteem, Kyousuke felt somewhat sad.

Eiri and Maina were both quite outstanding beauties. Getting along with them felt really nice, but Kyousuke never expected to be rejected on the spot. Instant kill.

Towards Kyousuke whose feelings were somewhat hurt, Renko nodded with a "foosh."

"Yes. Then it's decided! Go out with me, Kyousuke."

"I refuse."

"-----"

"Oh no... B-Because, think about it! After all, you're wearing a gas mask and I can't see your face. Although I really like how you're always energetic and cheerful, asking me to go steady with someone who I've never seen the face, that's a bit much..."

Given such an appearance, it was quite terrifying to see Renko suddenly go silent, impossible to tell what was going on with her.

As Kyousuke felt overwhelmed by the pressure and put his smile away, Renko sighed "shuko."

"What was that about caring more about personality than appearances? Were you lying?"

"N-No, I wasn't lying... But there are limits, right? Besides, someone who wears a gas mask twenty-four hours a day is just too sketchy, I can't help but wonder if they're alright in the head... Right?"

"So mean... That's so mean, Kyousuke! Too mean! I clearly believed in you so much... I clearly believed in you to be someone who doesn't pick partners based on appearances, Kyousuke. I clearly believed that a massive rack was enough!"

Like a casually drawn screaming caricature, Renko pounced on Kyousuke.

Then naturally, her bountiful bosom was pressed against the vicinity of his waist...

This sense of softness and fullness made Kyousuke scream in surprise.

"Oi!? Idiot... Let go now! Let go of me!"

"No! Not letting go, not letting go, and not letting go! Foosh! Foosh!"

"Stop throwing a tantrum! Stop pressing your boobs against me! Y-You're moving too intensely..."

Impossible to tell if it was deliberate or by chance, while Renko twisted her body while going "not letting go", her breasts were slowly pressed and deformed, clamping a certain part of his body between them, resulting in a super pleasurable feeling that was impossible to pull out from.

Although the hardness of the gas mask was hurting him, Kyousuke was starting to half-seriously think--"A gas mask is fine too."

"...Tsk."

A sharp tongue clicking. Eiri was glaring at Kyousuke and Renko with murderous eyes.

Maina was holding her cheeks, wailing "So bold, Renko-chan...", blushing.

Kyousuke finally regained his senses and frantically placed his hands on Renko's shoulders, about to push her away.

"Urgh, hey... Let go, masked boobs! Stop this nonsense! Eiri and Maina are still watching! Can't you pay a little attention on other people's gazes--"

"Right, Kyousuke! There's another way as well!"

Instantly, Renko withdrew from him and said loudly.

Faced with the excessively sudden reaction, Kyousuke asked in stunned surprise:

"...Huh? Which way is that? ...Besides, what are you talking about?"

"Confessions, confessions! I believe that this is the best way to stem the tide of confessions."

As Kyousuke asked "Really!? ...How?", Renko laughed "foosh."

"Then please look forward to it. The effects will be great, just relax. Allow me to terminate these dangerous days! Hmmshuko~!"

Renko puffed out her chest in an exaggerated manner and asserted.

Seeing Renko show a reliable side in a rare moment, Kyousuke's voice became emotional:

"That's quite busty... no, I mean confident of you. I'm counting on you, Renko!"

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"I must be a moron for counting on you."

Saturday passed, a day off. Monday arrived to herald a new week.

When lunch break arrived, Kyousuke was instantly disappointed in the cafeteria. Feeling drained completely, he was staring at the spoonful of "overnight leftover omelette rice" being presented towards him accompanied by "Open up and say ah~"

Sitting by his side, arm in arm, Renko was using her other arm to feed Kyousuke intimately. Sighing "shuko...", she put down the spoon in disappointment.

"What's wrong, Kyousuke? You're looking down. Let's get even more lovey dovey~"

Still not finished, Renko hugged his arm even tighter, pressing against Kyousuke. Not just her breasts, but all parts of her body were so soft that it made him dizzy. The sweet fragrance of soap wafted from her body.

"..."

If it weren't for the gas mask flashing in and out of the corner of his view, Kyousuke would surely have lost all reason.

Starting from when they met up during break, Renko had been sticking close to him like this. --As though deliberately performing a show for others to see.

"...Say, Renko. The way you're sticking to me, it really does stop other girls from approaching me, but is there no other way? The way you're acting, it makes it look like we're going out."

"Yes, isn't that right? That's exactly the plan. The 'Making public displays of affection to make everyone think we're going out' plan! After all, we're not actually going out for real, so there's nothing bad, right?"

"No, that's not what I mean. What should I say? This way..."

I don't want others to misunderstand that I'm going out with a sketchy girl who wears a gas mask. No matter what, Kyousuke could not bring himself to openly admit something like that.

"...'I don't want others to misunderstand that I'm going out with a sketchy girl who wears a gas mask'? If I were Kyousuke, that's definitely what I'd be afraid of. People would start questioning my tastes."

Sitting diagonally opposite him, Eiri spoke Kyousuke's thoughts for him.

Hearing the merciless accusation, Renko was dealt a great blow.

"I'm not some kind of slut! That's a misunderstanding! No way, can none of you see my big clear eyes!?"

"...Yeah right, like anyone can see them. They're not exposed. Besides, you're totally acting like a slut, right? Sticking to me so closely like this, aren't you embarrassed? ...Look at Maina."

"...Auau."

Maina's petite body was curled into a ball, she looked very embarrassed.

"...You're overreacting to begin with. Those fangirls' confessions are all just jumping on the bandwagon, so you can just ignore them. If you end up provoking them, won't it be counterproductive?"

Finally, Eiri went "...Hmph" and shoved some "overnight leftover pasta" into her mouth.

Impossible to tell if Renko had accepted Eiri's accusations, but Renko separated from Kyousuke's body and nodded in exaggeration.

"I see. I finally get it. In other words, what Eiri means is: 'Acting lovey dovey in front of me, are you picking a fight? But really I want to act lovey dovey with Kyousuke too!' Is that it?"

"--Pffft!?"

Pasta flew out of Eiri's mouth.

"Kyah!? Are you okay, Eiri-chan!? Awawawa."

Maina put down her chopsticks and stroked Eiri's back.

Tears welling up in the corners of Eiri's slender eyes, she glared angrily at Renko.

"How did you jump to that conclusion!? That's so stupid! Just go and die. You wanna die!?"

"Eh... Because Eiri, didn't you say 'Don't provoke me?' Right?"

"I didn't say that! Also, stop trying to imitate the way I speak. It's so annoying."

'...It's not like I'm imitating you.'

"Huh!? I told you not to imitate me, didn't I!? Also, that's not similar at all!"

'A flat chest is a status symbol. There is value in scarcity. It doesn't bother me at all. Just go die already.'

"S-So annoying! Shut up! Watch out or I'll slaughter you, okay!?"

Renko's falsetto voice was quite amazing. Eiri stood up, leaned forward and shouted violently.

Her usually sleepy-looking eyes were opened almost 90%, her face bright red.

"Uwahhhhhhh, Eiri is angry!? Save me, Kyousuke. I'll be killed!"

Renko pounced with excessive momentum, causing Kyousuke's nose to smash violently against the gas mask.

Two soft sensations expanded on his chest.

"Ouch!? Hey, stop pressing against me, Renko!"

--Besides, stop getting me caught up!

While Kyousuke tried hard to push Renko away, Eiri watched with mad rage in her eyes.

Turning into tangible force, the anger lifted her eyebrows, twitching as though convulsing.

"...Why are you pretending to turn her down? Clearly you're getting aroused, pervert. Sicko."

"Huh? What are you talking about?"

"Nosebleeding, you're nosebleeding, Kyousuke-kun."

"...Eh?"

Pointed out by Maina, Kyousuke confirmed.

Bright red blood from his nose was making his fingers wet.

"W-What the heck is this!? No wait, it's because I bumped into Renko's mask--"

"It's because you bumped into her chest. Oh well, as expected of a guy who gets off just from breasts... Absolutely nonsensical. Isn't it just lumps of fat. ...Hmph."

"Poor Eiri-chan has no boobs."

"----"

"Ahhhhhhhhhhh!? S-S-S-S-S-Sorry! The issue that's bothering Eiri-chan the most, I can't believe I... Awawawa."

Probably never expecting Maina to say something like that as well, Eiri slammed her hands on the dining table, gnashing her teeth. Her slender shoulders were trembling slightly.

Laughing "foosh" in satisfaction, Renko separated herself from Kyousuke's body.

"Looks like I won? Oh well, there are people who like small ones too, after all. Don't worry too much about it! Even though Kyousuke loves big ones. Even though Kyousuke loves big ones! ...I'll lend you my bosom for you to cry on, okay, Eiri?"

Repeating the same sentence twice for some reason, Renko stroked Eiri's head while comforting her.

Eiri's trembling suddenly stopped. Slowly, she looked up with murder in her eyes.

"I-I'm not depressed at all, idiot!"

Probably trying to push Renko away, Eiri carelessly swung her right hand.

Frightened "Uwah!?", Renko decisively leaned back onto the seat, arms flailing.

"W-W-W-W-W-W-What are you doing, Eiri!? That was so dangerous!"

--Come on, it's just her nails that were about to touch you, what's so dangerous about that?

Seeing Renko's excessive reaction, although Eiri was taken aback slightly, she still proceeded to frown in annoyance immediately.

"A-Annoying! Serves you right, okay!? Talking boobs boobbs boobs all the time... Shut your trap for a bit! Besides, what the fuck is with your mask? Trying to be Slipknot? Screaming Mad George? Before anyone finds you avant-garde, they'll first question your sanity."

Leaning forward, Eiri scolded Renko.

"What are you talking about!? Don't badmouth them... I can't ignore what you said about them! Watch out or I'll give you rock-style headbutt!?"

Renko was also fired up in opposition, slamming the table and leaning forward.

Between the two girls whose foreheads were touching, intense sparks flew.

"...Hmph. Just try it if you can. See who gets killed."

"Hey! You're trying to get revenge for just now? In terms of breasts, it's my overwhelming victory. Foosh."

"Kutsu... A-Apart from breasts, it's my overwhelming victory! What do you have that's attractive apart from breasts?"

"Of course there's more! Like double eyelids and big clear eyes, like sexy and charming lips--"

"Huh? All I see are two dry eyepieces and a big and stupid looking respirator. Stop playing the fool on the same points over and over again, okay? ...Besides."

At this moment, Eiri's mouth was upturned in a frown as she glanced at Kyousuke.

"Here you go~" Maina politely handed him a tissue which Kyousuke used to plug his nose. " "...Hmm?" " The two of them made sounds of puzzlement at the same time, cocking their heads.

"...What are you two acting so intimate for? Trying to pick a fight?"

"That's right that's right, so terrible! Making a move while Eiri and I are fighting over Kyousuke... Y-You... Boyfriend stealer! Philanderer!"

Renko yelled in a voice loud enough to fill the entire cafeteria, slamming the table furiously.

"...Huh? I'm not fighting over him." Eiri's expression was looking worse and worse.

Called a boyfriend stealer, Maina was shocked, her eyes moving between Renko and Eiri.

"Awawa... S-Sorry! I-I-I-I-I-I had no intention of that... Awawa."

"Hey, calm down, girls!? Also, control the level of your voices, okay--"

Kyousuke had just spoken when he noticed.

The surrounding gazes, girls staring at Kyousuke's squabbling group. The level of danger was rising dramatically.

The heavy feelings were making Kyousuke dizzy from pressure.

--Jealousy. Or hatred.

Admiration and infatuation directed towards Kyousuke was converted into diametrically opposite traits.

The reason was obvious. Stuck in the middle of three girls fighting over him, this was the legendary hellish scenario of shuraba in other people's eyes. This kind of scene must surely be uncomfortable to watch.

Annoying sweat began to drip as ominous voices invaded Kyousuke's ears.

"Eeeeee! Those bitches, how dare they try to steal my beloved Kyousuke-sama('s life)!"

"Four of them. How should I eat them? Roasted, steamed, deep-fried, boiled..."

"Kyousuke, you disappoint me too much. Enough, time for destruction. Whatever I cannot obtain, I shall destroy utterly."

"Gwahhhhhhh!? Calm down! Calm down, Azrael! Thou canst release 'Heaven Shall Burn' anon! 'Tis going to get the surroundings caught up!"

"..."

Kyousuke's surroundings had worsened compared to before.

There was a sense of pressure as though the crowd might attack all at once in the next second.

In other words, Renko's 'Making public displays of affection to make everyone think we're going out' plan was going all to hell. Or rather, it was making things worse instead of helping.

And at this time, speaking of the culprit...

"Idiot! Kyousuke is a big fat idiot! But still, I love you!"

Without caring about the surrounding situation, she hugged him.

Still committed to the plan, Renko yelled while grinding herself against him.

Hostility, raining down like machine gunfire, gradually turned in to veritable killing intent.

"You're the idiot, Renko! Stop provoking those people!"

--Shaka shaka shaka shaka.

"Stop listening to that music and listen to me! Lower the volume, lower the volume!"

Speaking of which, Renko had been listening to music all along...

That was why she heard almost nothing of the surroundings.

"It's not like I'm totally blameless..." Kyousuke made a bitter expression.

The girls' jealousy and hate were directed more towards Renko than Kyousuke.

It seemed that Eiri was the only one who noticed this. Simply throwing a glance at Maina who was repeating "I'm not a boyfriend stealer..." nonstop, Eiri mostly glared at the surroundings.

"Don't worry, Kyousuke... I'll stay with Maina. I won't let anyone hurt her."

As expected of the murderer of six. Commendable courage.

Maina's exceptional clumsiness was also a murder weapon in itself so it was probably not that easy for her to fall victim to others.

Was the one who needed worrying Renko after all--?

"...Isn't it fine to leave her alone? After all, she's not in the same class and she's the one who brought this on herself. Also chattering nonstop and waving that giant bust around... Or rather, aren't those things eyesores? Just die already."

Eiri nonchalantly offered mean advice. The giant bust was merely a personal grudge...

"Eh!?" While rubbing herself against Kyousuke's chest, Renko looked at Eiri in surprise.

"Just die already... That's so mean! It's such a blow to me that I'll really die, you know!? Because I'm a girl with a fragile body and mind! Right now, I am so fragile that I'm no different from a baby. Foosh."

Faced with Renko's deliberate act, Kyousuke and Eiri sighed deeply.

Although they had no idea what kind of murderer she was, judging from Renko's happy-go-lucky ways, there was probably no need to worry about her.

Or rather, Kyousuke was really curious on how she would look when she was crying sincerely for once.

If that happened, perhaps the stubborn mask that Renko always wore might be taken off--

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"...Ren-ko?"

A few days after the farce in the cafeteria, it was during break after the second period. Standing before the dramatically changed Renko, Kyousuke muttered in surprise. Maina went "Eh!?", gasping while Eiri pursed her lips silently.

"Who the heck did this... S-So mean..."

The way she looked could only be described as tragic.

On the surface of the gas mask, that was the kind of graffiti that covered it.

"Ugly" "BITCH" "Shameless slutty sow" "I am a meat urinal" "RAPE ME" "Holstein" "Sag!" "Fake tits" "Shit" "Die" "DAI" "Die from heatstroke" etc.

Written in a mess of colored ink, this graffiti was filled with malice, hostility and murderous intent.

The black surface was almost completely covered.

Although there were no external injuries, the vandals' intense evil was not much better. Tangile malice was terrifying.

This was a warning or perhaps a threat.

Sitting in the middle of Kyousuke's group who were frozen in their seats, Renko sighed "shuko..." and raised her hand.

"Oh dear~ I was so frightened. After waking up, I found myself completely surrounded by girls. All of them giving off scary murderous intent... Looks like there was an altercation while I was napping. I asked 'what's up?' and ended up getting a 'you only noticed now!' response as well as 'you slow bitch'."

"...W-What a disaster."

Those people probably never expected Renko to actually fall asleep so they misunderstood, thinking she was ignoring them.

Thinking the gas mask wearing girl was sitting down very normally then getting up very normally.

"Then when first period began, the teacher looked at my face and asked '...What is going on with that?' I answered 'Just as you see, it (the gas mask) is for being fashionable.' The teacher made a strange look and went silent. ...Oh my? I felt strange so I asked people behind me, but no one answered. Is my mask very weird?"

Tilting her head, Renko sounded surprisingly relaxed.

She seemed completely unaware of her situation.

Kyousuke did not know whether to call her naive or unguarded... What a girl who just did whatever she wanted.

As much as he felt surprised, Kyousuke still told Renko the source of her puzzlement.

"Renko... Your mask is a total mess, it's been drawn and written on, you know?"

"W-W-W-W-What did you say!? Who the heck... When!?"

Renko leaned back, using her entire body to express her surprise.

"...Isn't it obvious? Of course it's that crowd of girls who were surrounding you. Besides, you ignored them so it's natural that they'd hate you, right? What a bunch of underhanded bitches... They should all die already."

"That's right that's right, it's so mean! Renko-chan is so pitiful... So much terrible stuff written there. It needs to be cleaned up as quickly as possible... Auau."

Maina got up and used her handkerchief to wipe Renko's mask. However, not all of it came off.

Even so, Maina continued to scrub hard. Renko stroked Maina's head to comfort her.

"Yes, thank you, Maina. But don't worry. By next break, it'll come off totally clean. By the way, what's written on there? Busty Beauty?"

"No... Stuff like 'Demon Tits Slut', 'Poison Tits Slut' and 'Evil Tits Slut'."

"Ehhh!? Like I said, I'm not a slut! I don't get why there's poison and evil there! Using the Japanese language like this is totally weird! It's like swearing."

"Not 'like swearing', it is swearing."

"...Since it's graffiti, of course there's swearing."

Kyousuke and Eiri retorted at the same time. How much is she lacking in a sense of crisis...

Even failing to notice hostility directed towards her.

As expected, Renko crossed her arms in puzzlement.

"But why suddenly do this to me? And all of them were girls. Are they jealous of my beautiful face and boobs? Just like Eiri here. Foosh."

Speaking with a surprised voice, she speculated right on target.

Eiri's eyebrow quivered then she glanced sideways at the graffiti-covered mask.

"...Huh? How is that even possible, you retard. Has all your nutrients gone to those dead tits, so your brain is empty? Die, die die, suffocate to death."

"Ehhhhhhhhh!? Making me out to be so worthless, that's so mean... So mean."

"Yeah! Eiri-chan, please don't say anymore! Renko-chan is still sad..."

Shielding Renko, Maina reprimanded Eiri.

Probably because Maina took Renko's side, Eiri frowned with displeasure.

"...Nothing much. I'm just reading out the graffiti. Besides, she's totally not sad... But having been vandalized like this, you're still able to chatter like this? At least show some surging of murderous rage."

In a testing tone of voice, Eiri tried to incite the still indifferent Renko.

"Well." Renko pressed her index finger against her chin, pondered and said:

"Can't get any to surge! Rather, since everyone gathered to do graffiti, isn't that kind of fun? Foosh. Although it's unfortunate I can't read it myself... Hey hey, what's written there? This is a rare chance, tell me!"

" " "....." " "

Renko asked enthusiastically. Her naive innocence made Kyousuke, Eiri and Maina exchange looks with one another.

The same question was written on all of their faces.

--Has Renko really killed someone? Unfazed no matter how terrible the things done to her, Renko only looked like a harmless, silly girl. Not the slightest trace of viciousness could be felt from her.

Or perhaps, she was only hiding the madness in her heart?

--No idea. The ugly, graffiti-covered mask hid Renko's interior securely and tightly together with her real face. Only now, Kyousuke felt concrete fear towards Renko's unknown background... towards something hidden beneath her mask and behavior.

"Hey hey everyone! Stop staying silent and tell me. If this continues, I'll be so curious about the mask that I won't be able to concentrate during class next period. Hey, look carefully!"

On the other hand, the person in question, Renko, was completely unaware of the chills in Kyousuke's heart. Pulling her hoodie off, reorienting herself, she pointed to the other side of the mask which had been covered so far.

Taking another look, this mask, which only covered the front of the face, was surprisingly small in area.

Although her ears were covered up by unfashionable earphones, everything else was essentially exposed.

From the gaps between the black straps securing the mask to her head, out draped silver hair with a tint of blue. Just as Kyousuke stared in mesmerization, certain graffiti snatched his attention.

On the right face of the gas mask, near the headphones, written in pink highlighter:

To Kyousuke-kun: Lunchtime tomorrow, waiting for you behind the gym Please come alone, okay? Unless you want this chick to be killed

--A note calling Kyousuke out.

Its contents was basically the same as the love letters he had been receiving.

However, the threat in the last sentence was a first. Probably because Kyousuke made a grim expression without paying attention, Eiri, who was sitting on the other side of Renko, looked at Kyousuke with surprised eyes.

"...What's the matter, Kyousuke?"

"Hmm? Oh, nothing... Nothing at all. Hahaha..."

Kyousuke smoothed things over with a smile.

The fear and unease caused by Renko just now was occupying Kyousuke's mind, troubling him.

If he ignored this invitation, Renko would be endangered. However, to Kyousuke and the others, this might turn out to be an excellent opportunity to expose that something Renko was hiding...

No matter what kind of madness Renko was hiding under her mask, she was probably going to drop the pretense in a life and death situation. The instant before she was about to be killed, no one would continue hiding their deadly weapon--Madness.

(What should I do... Ignore it? After all, it doesn't really hurt me.)

When invited previously, Kyousuke would be in life-risking danger if he did not accept. Although Kyousuke felt that it would be better to hide in ambush with resolve rather than sit around waiting for surprise attacks to spring, he still deliberately adhered to etiquette.

--But this time was different.

Even if he ignored this invitation, the one in danger was Renko, not Kyousuke.

Also, this was a chance to expose that something Renko was hiding. Two birds with one stone. However...

"Jeez! Stop with this ignoring play, okay!? So mean. I can let strangers' graffiti slide... But you're my friends. I'll get angry if you keep ignoring me like this, you know?"

Renko put up her hood again and laughed "foosh" in a joking manner.

Staring at the enigmatic Renko, Kyousuke thought:

What if this friendly and naive girl was hiding nothing and simply got killed? Then wouldn't that be equivalent to Kyousuke killing her?

If that happened, then he would be no different from the others, those murderers whom he despised and hated.

(Right... What the heck am I thinking about? The answer was already decided from the start.)

"....."

Eiri made a look as though she wanted to say something, her gaze penetrating Kyousuke as he clenched his fist beneath the table.

But in the end, Eiri did not question the matter.

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"Huh? ...What the heck, there's no one here. Am I too early?"

At the appointed time, Kyousuke leisurely made his way behind the gym. Sweeping his gaze across the deserted surroundings, he scratched the back of his head. Stuck between the building and some trees, this place was quite dark even during the daytime.

Even though he had been called out here many times already, this was actually his first time coming here alone.

Renko and the girls, who had been guarding Kyousuke in previous times, were currently far away in the cafeteria.

Kyousuke had made an excuse "I've got something to do so I'll be off first..." to take action alone.

In other words, if an emergency actually came up, he could not expect any help to come...

"Argh, damn it... So scary. Also, too slow... Jeez, this is making me so anxious."

Under extreme nervous tension, his heart was pounding like a ringing alarm clock.

Inside his pocket, Kyousuke's fists were producing handfuls of cold sweat.

--Just at this moment.

"Oh good afternoon. Sorry for making you wait."

A familiar male voice.

"...!?"

His heart skipped a beat. Gulping forcefully, Kyousuke slowly turned around.

The figure emerging from behind the building, waving to him, was a handsome youth with light-brown hair.

Despite being wrapped in bandages with bandaids and gauze all over, a painful sight, his expression seemed totally unfazed by all this and was quite joyful.

Foreboding premonitions turned into a terrifying chill, rushing along Kyousuke's spine.

"...Shinji? Why are you--"

As soon as he asked, more students appeared from behind Shinji, behind the gym.

One, two, three, four... Plus Shinji, a total of six. All boys.

These guys were probably all first-years. Kyousuke had seen them in the corridors a number of times.

--But not only that.

The boys were also emerging from the shadows in the opposite direction, apparently trying to cut off Kyousuke's escape route.

Hence, everyone glared at Kyousuke as though they were about to rush him down.

At this moment, Shinji shrugged in amusement, sticking out his tongue.

"Oh, were you looking forward to this? Sorry... Fufufu. But I'm very happy, Kamiya-san. You came alone as requested. After all, we have no wish of fighting those troublesome characters."

"...Oh I see. I get it now."

With the grinning Shinji's appearance, Kyousuke came to a sudden realization--He was cornered.

The message calling him out was probably what Shinji asked friends in Class B to write so as to lure Kyousuke out. In other words, at this rate...

(I might very well get killed. --Hey, that's bad! It's over... Is my life this short!? Hey hey hey, what should I do? What should I do!?)

Despite acting calm in outward behavior, Kyousuke's mind was virtually a mess.

The boys were all showing murderous intent, vicious light glinting in all their eyes

Just like the way girls were jealous of Renko for getting intimate with Kyousuke, boys were jealous of Kyousuke for attracting so many girls, thus filling them with murderous intent.

"Kamiya! You fucking show-off! Always making girls serving you by your side... Stop that shit! I'll kill you... I'll definitely kill you!"

"H-Heeheehee... Killing a riajuu... Dissecting a riajuu... H-Heehee... I'll let you taste the terror of the non-ria..."

"I can't forgive you, this is intolerable! Forget that masked slut, I can't believe you're making moves on the other two beauties, and getting confessions every day! Die, not dai but die!"

"O Kamiya, thou bearest sins too burdensome and heavy... At least, eternal slumber shall by granted by this hand of mine! Come, a boisterous dance, my most beloved Azrael! Devour this filthy body completely! Kukuku... Uhahaha... Hahahahahaha!"

Throwing down sunglasses, licking lips, stomping the ground, readying left hands--

Twelve convicted murderers approached Kyousuke, step by step.

Although unarmed, the madness in their eyes was enough to give Kyousuke cold feet. Finally, Shinji tossed his hair smugly.

"Indeed, you killed twelve ordinary people in one go. But what about twelve murderers at once? Come, try killing us! Or else--"

Suddenly, Shinji raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

At the signal, the murderers all drew their weapons.

Kitchen knife, scissors, boxcutters, daggers, drills... etc.

--These were all their murder weapons.

"...You'll be killed, you know? Fufufu."

Grinning sadistically, Shinji slowly crossed his arms.

Probably refusing to dirty his own hands. Shinji was not carrying a murder weapon.

Instead, as though treating language as a murder weapon, he continued to speak:

"These weapons were obtained from a certain person. This was done secretly in prison, like trading contraband items. That said, to think so many dangerous items are in circulation, how terrible... That someone must hate you quite a lot for your behavior, that's probably why these things were sold to us at bargain prices, then--"

The smile disappeared from Shinji's face.

As though about to swallow Kyousuke live, his bloodshot eyes widened in an exaggerated manner.

"You'll be disposed of completely."

He threatened.

He threatened to dispose of Kyousuke completely.

He threatened to commit a new murder inside this school meant for reforming murderers.

"...Huh?"

Kyousuke's mind instantly went blank. Dressed in school uniforms, the murderers approached step by step, eyes showing madness, murder weapons in their hands. Presented with this scene, Kyousuke could not move at all.

Expressionlessly, Shinji stared at Kyousuke who was starting to tremble, unable to suppress it.

"Open our eyes, Kamiya-san. Show us your abilities as the Mass Murderer of Twelve. Let's see how many you can actually kill... Fufu."

Next, his expression changed--Immediately.

"Enough, just shut the fuck up and let us kill him. KAMIYA KYOUSUKE!!!!!"

Wielding a butterfly knife, Oonogi was in a roused state of excitement.

Apart from Shinji, all eleven murderers charged at Kyousuke.

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"Chibe!?"

Using his full power, Kyousuke landed a right straight in the side of Oonogi's face.

Spurting saliva mixed with blood uncontrollably, Oonogi flew into the trees and stopped moving.

Kyousuke stomped the ground hard, stabilizing his body that had leaned forward from the punch's momentum.

Ten minutes after the battle began, Kyousuke was beginning to pant.

--Even so.

"Huff... Huff... You guys aren't as tough... as I thought..."

Catching his breath, supporting himself with a hand on one knee, Kyousuke smiled boldly.

Among the eleven murderers, the only one left unharmed was a boy struggling for some unknown reason, crouching on the ground while holding down his left arm. "Settle down! Settle down, Azrael! Ku... This brute hath gone berserk from excessive excitement... Gwahhhhhhhhhhhh!?"

All the other bastards had suffered tragic payback from Kyousuke.

Lying sprawled all over the place, the boys were all not moving.

Kyousuke swept his gaze across the surroundings. All of them were defeated. Eyes rolled over, white.

Looking at his comrades' pitiful state, Shinji sighed and rested his forehead against his hand.

"What a bunch of useless guys, can't stand 'em... But anyway, Kamiya-san, to think that so many people failed to kill you, are you a monster? ...You're totally beyond common logic."

Throwing these words down, Shinji looked at Kyousuke in apprehension.

"I'm no monster at all... You murderers just happen to be fucking weak."

Kyousuke answered, his upright body was covered in wounds, bleeding.

His hair and uniform was a mess. On exposed skin were numerous wounds, big and small.

--But this level of injury was not worth mentioning at all.

Although cuts bled conspicuously, they were mere flesh wounds. Depleted stamina was simply due to volume of exercise and extreme tension, easily recovered quickly. For Kyousuke who had survived countless hellish battlefields, this did not even count as a tough crisis.

Despite being murderers, these guys are like amateurs at fighting. Kyousuke laughed in derision.

"...Then what now? You're only down to two, Shinji?"

"Two? ...Oh. There's this useless fellow here too. But speaking of which..."

After glancing at the boy on his right who was muttering nonstop, Shinji fell silent.

Biting his lip, while his shoulders slumped...

"...Fu ...Fufu... Fufufu... Aha... Ahahahaha..."

--His shoulders shook.

His lips in a crescent, he laughed in mockery.

Kyousuke naturally stared at Shinji, but even the boy who was holding down his left arm also looked at Shinji in puzzlement.

"...What's so funny?"

Faced with Kyousuke's quiet question, Shinji suddenly stopped roaring with laughter and looked up.

Filled with joy and superiority, this face gave Kyousuke a sudden wave of forboding and terrifying chill, rushing along his spine.

"What's so funny? ...Fufu. Of course it's funny... Ahaha. I said 'let's see how many you can actually kill' didn't I? But Kamiya-san..."

Shinji narrowed his eyes. What his sight captured was not Kyousuke.

--It was behind the frowning Kyousuke.

"Ah, shit man... Ouch! You really dared to fight for real, Kamiya... I'm gonna kill you for sure!"

"H-Heehee... I got punched. Even my old man has never hit me... H-Heeheehee..."

"Unforgivable. Unforgivable unforgivable unforgivable unforgivable unforgivable... Absolutely unforgivable!"

Several boys recovered their killing intent, standing up with their murder weapons.

Shinji's clear voice giggled again, jeering:

"That's right, none of us were killed, you know? Are you really trying to kill anyone? Do you still live up to the title of the Mass Murderer of Twelve? Fufufu."

"...!?"

Just as Shinji pointed out, this stabbed straight into Kyousuke's sore spot.

Kyousuke was not the Mass Murderer of Twelve but just a normal person who could not be more ordinary. He had no intent to kill at all. Even with murderous intent, he was not going to kill--Neither was he capable of it.

Seeing Kyousuke clench his teeth, Shinji laughed even harder.

"...Come, what now? At this rate, you will be killed, you know?"

Perhaps affected by Shinji's confidence, the boy who was holding his left arm went "Hoo... Finally, thou hast calmed, Azrael. Lend me your assistance. So, let us devour to our hearts' content! Uhahahaha!" Vigorously, he lifted his right arm, holding a nailed bat.

--Surrounding Kyousuke, including Shinji, there were five in total.

Despite suffering somewhat heavy injuries, the murder in their eyes had grown even stronger.

Although getting scared, Kyousuke discharged his fear into the surroundings.

"That's right... I didn't intent to kill any of you at all... But I'm not gonna get killed by you either! Kill me if you think you've got the chops! You fuckers, all I need to do is beat you half dead! Just watch and see if I don't pummel you into the ground so hard you won't get up--"

--Whoosh, as though trying to interrupt Kyousuke's angry shout, Shinji drew his murder weapon.

"Oh so that's it, huh? Then let me grant your death wish... Ufufu."

Taking out from the inside pocket of his blazer was a rugged revolver.

"Eh!? This is... a gun? No way..."

The arrival of an unexpected murder weapon made all life drain from Kyousuke.

Even for Kyousuke, getting pointed at by a gun was a first time.

Aiming at the awkward Kyousuke, Shinji held the revolver in both hands.

"Of course it's the real thing, Kamiya-san! The one who sold this deadly weapon to us... Like us, that person really wants you dead. Even going as far as to give us this amazing trump card. Fufu... If we fail to kill you, we will be disciplined."

Shinji cocked the hammer, his brown irises precipitated with darkness, staring straight at Kyousuke.

"....."

I must escape--Although Kyousuke thought that, with the muzzle already capturing him in its sights, there was no way to divert Shinji's attention.

As though devoured by the darkness in the gun's muzzle, Kyousuke's mind was gradually contaminated with darkness.

The color of despair, erasing, obliterating everything.

"An excellent look, Kamiya-san... Are you tired? Then allow me to liberate you. Death will bring you eternal rest. If you were a girl, I could use these hands of mine to strangle and violate you directly... Sorry, fuheehee."

Behind the grinning Shinji, there was a dense forest.

The foliage formed a dense canopy, blocking light, making it quite dark even during the daytime, looking like an illustration of Shinji and the other murderers' hearts and souls.

'...Oh no, I'm gonna die'--Kyousuke reacted with intense emotion, watching this scene.

Wriggling restlessly in the darkness, the silhouette of Ayaka flickered in the wind for an instant.

"Then goodnight, Kamiya-san... I wish you a nightmare."

Smile disappeared, Shinji's finger placed itself on the trigger.

--Then just at this moment.

"...Just die already."

Out from the forest flew a shadow.

The shadow approached Shinji with speed faster than the eye could follow, from behind.

"...Don't move."

Swiftly and accurately, Shinji was caught.

Left hand covering his mouth, the fingers of the right hand were pressed against his Adam's apple.

On those slender fingertips were nails of beautiful crimson.

"Don't move or I'll kill you... I'll slit your throat. Put the gun down quietly."

The owner of the nails spoke coldly to the stunned Shinji.

Kyousuke and the other murderers were also rendered speechless, feeling perplexed by the sudden development.

Everyone's gaze gathered upon the person who had taken Shinji hostage from behind--

"All of you too, don't move... If you care about his worthless life."

The extremely short miniskirt of the uniform. The wavy rust-red ponytail. A pair of eyes, the same color as her hair. The girl's mood was even worse than usual.

"W-Why... Why are you here--Eiri?"

"...Nothing much. I just came to check out the situation... Besides, what's with you? Why didn't you kill a single one of them? Getting this hurt... Since you're the Mass Murderer of Twelve, then kill these worthless fools before they kill you. Making me go out of my way to do this kind of thing..."

Eiri kept grumbling in a displeased voice.

Then Shinji seemed to notice that the one threatening him was Eiri.

"Fufu... Seriously, don't just suddenly hug me, Eiri-san... Are you trying to arouse me? Eiri-san's fingers and this ice-cold feeling are great... May I enjoy it?"

Shinji let go of the gun, freeing his right hand and prepared to stick it towards Eiri's thigh. Instantly...

"Don't move--Or you want to be sliced?"

Pressed agains his throat, the fingernail lightly pierced.

Skin was torn open, fresh blood emerged from the wound.

"...!?"

Shinji held his breath and froze again. Tension raced madly among the murderers. Slicing barehanded, how? "...Hmph", Eiri scoffed at the baffled audience.

"...What a bunch of amateurs. Murder weapons are only valuable when hidden. The target must not notice until the moment it is used, then the target is killed. I can't believe you pulled out your weapons as though it's a show or something... Have you heard of an ambush? A true murder weapon... is something that kills the enemy without giving them time to react in the instant they realize. --Like my fingernails, for example."

Eiri's fingernails. Pure red nail polish as a background, decorated beautifully with colorful rhinestones and patterned edges on the front tip.

Using jeweled steel that gave off black luster--a patterned edge.

"The fingernail sword "Scarlet Slicing." Concealed at the tip of fingernails, an extremely flat, extremely small Japanese sword. Let alone a person's body, even timber and plastic can be cut like a knife through butter. Two

hands, with the index, middle and ring fingers, a total of six Japanese swords--These are my weapons."

Eiri's now fully awakened eyes were glinting like lustrous blades.

This was the crystallization of pure killing intent, honed to the extreme.

Worry spread throughout the murderers, instantly turning into surprise--finally changing into fear.

Akabane Eiri. The murderer of six. The real number one killer in the class.

Even Kyousuke was witnessing this terror for the first time.

"...Do you know why I am talking about my murder weapons just before I am about to kill? Because showing your weapon before killing means giving a warning. I am warning you. Although I don't really mind slaughtering you all at once... But fixing up my nails is quite a pain. If you'll swear never to bother us again, I could let you off this once."

The rust-red eyes flashed like a sword as Eiri glared at the group.

Surrounding Kyousuke, the murderers backed away while looking at each other.

"Umm, hey... What do we do now?" "Those eyes are serious, yo?" "Gwahhhh!? My left arm..." "But there's only one opponent." "And just a girl too." "Also, heehee, no boobs... Heeheehee."

While these words were said, Eiri's eyes gave off a dangerous aura.

"...So. I'll start in order with killing this guy. First, I'll insert my finger near the kidneys, that's where nerves are concentrated, so you'll feel like dying from pain, you know? Then your intestines will convulse from the intense pain like being grabbed. While you lose your balance, I'll push you down and toy with your belly... Slicing skin open, slicing flesh, shaving fat off then cutting the bones, messing around with the internal organs--"

"I-I-I-I-I got it! Please stop! I'll obey you, stop!"

Interrupting Eiri's indifferent speech, Shinji screamed.

His face was deathly pale. All the other murderers had lost their will to fight completely.

Eiri's finger was crawling from Shinji's throat all the way to just above his kidney. She smiled and looked up with satisfaction.

"...Eh, really, good for you. After all, you're just a bunch of useless retards who can only capture powerless prey... Okay, you lot, pick up the fallen, clean up and get lost, then I'll release this guy... Okay, hurry up and get out of my sight."

Eiri motioned with her chin. No one dared to resist.

Throwing down their weapons, they picked up their unconscious friends and escaped like a puff of smoke.

While leaving, "I-I won't forget this, flat chest!" Oonogi threw down fighting words but as soon as Eirii glared at him, he went: "Flat chests are the best! Washing boards are the best! A Cups are the loveliest! How can world peace come if not through flat chests!?" Raising a fist, fleeing in an instant.

As though too drained of the strength to get angry, Eiri sighed.

After sending the gun on the ground flying with a sideways kick, she said:

"...Okay, you get lost too. Stop bothering us, you perverted fake gentleman. I don't want your filthy blood to dirty my precious nails."

After saying that, this time she finally delivered a full-powered kick to Shinji's ass, sending him flying.

"Ah!?"

Unable to resist the force, Shinji fell right over, flat on his face.

Because his head was down, his face could not be read. Who knows if it was from fear or humiliation--his body trembled slightly. Tightening his fingers, he dug at the dirt on the ground.

"Fu... Fufu... Fuhe... Hehe... Fuhehe..."

From Shinji's mouth came terrifying laughter.

His bleeding throat sounded loudly as Shinji laughed.

"I got it, Eiri-san... I won't make a move on you guys anymore. However..."

Shinji slowly stood up and faced Eiri again.

In this instant, as Kyousuke glanced at the side of his face--from that corner of his mouth, a grin was cracked.

"Remember this well. I will make my move... once Eiri-san is dead. When the time comes, like enjoying the decaying smell of dead bugs or dead beasts, allow me to fully enjoy you who has become a corpse... Fuheeheeheehee."

"..."

"We will meet again then. As soon as you die, I will rush over. My nose is very sensitive... Please remember this well, Eiri-san."

After glaring briefly at the leisurely departing Shinji, Eiri picked up the gun.

Then casually holding the gun ready, she aimed towards Shinji's back.

"Before me, how about you just die already... Bang."

Pretending to press the trigger, she relaxed her shoulders. From her eyes that were partially closed as usual, zero concern for Shinji's words could be felt...

I don't want her as an enemy--Kyousuke concluded with heartfelt intensity once more.

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"...Hmph. How unsightly, Kyousuke. You're a total mess, all covered in wounds."

Eiri walked over to Kyousuke who was sitting limp on the ground, leaning against the gym's wall.

Skillfully tossing her hair using her thumb and little finger that were not armed with blades, she looked down towards Kyousuke.

"...You call yourself the top murderer in the class? You, let alone twelve, I can't believe you didn't even kill one. You could have easily killed them if you wanted to... So why?"

"Ah, no... Umm, how should I say this--"

Because Kyousuke was an ordinary person who had not killed a single person in that horrific homicide case.

--Nevertheless, he could not possible answer honestly like that.

After letting the Eiri the murderer of six see his unsightly state, this answer was even more of a no go.

Seeing Kyousuke avert his gaze without saying anything, Eiri sighed.

"...I just don't get you. Clearly you've killed twelve people already, but you're acting excessively nice in weird ways. Going out of your way to throw yourself into a trap... And even hiding the reason from us. Seeing you act so strange, I followed quietly to see... Who knew you'd get done in on your own. I really don't get it... What the heck is going on with you?"

Eiri tapped the tip of her shoe against the ground, speaking impatiently.

Even so, hearing her care about him, Kyousuke stole a glance at Eiri.

The earlier, acute, killing intent in sleepy-looking, half-closed eyes was almost completely gone.

Like a re-sheathed sword, Eiri had turned back to her usual self.

Despite looking like she's always in a bad mood, Eiri was actually a very caring girl.

Precisely due to seing Eiri in her "Murderer of Six" form, Kyousuke became even more confused.

Why was Eiri also--

"Aren't you doing the same, acting excessively nice in weird ways? A murderer of six, going as far as to install blades in your fingernails to kill people, so why did you come all the way to help me? Not just me but also Maina that time. Why do you like to stick your nose in other people's business? In the end, you simply threatened them without killing a single person."

"....."

Eiri frowned, eyebrows squeezed together, her mouth upturned, and stopped talking.

After a brief silence, Eiri looked down at Kyousuke in mockery.

"...Can you not lump me together with you? I let them go because I believe that scaring them is enough. If they didn't obey, I would've slit his throat without mercy. Unlike you, who had no intention to kill from the start... I'm different. Basically, I--"

Saying that, stopping mid-sentence, Eiri stared at her fingernails.

The skillfully disguised fingernails were the murder weapons that Eiri had kept concealed all this time.

'Killing without the target noticing'--An art honed and woven simply for this purpose.

Even the abnormality of murderers was concentrated into this.

The fingernail sword "Scarlet Slicing." Eiri's gaze remained over her murder weapons, murmuring as though talking to herself:

"Rather than an amateur, I'm a professional."

"...Huh?"

Unable to understand what Eiri said, Kyousuke was confused.

"You mean a professional... killer?"

"Indeed. What one would call a 'hitman.' But in my case, 'assassin' would be more correct. Because those who kill for personal reasons or interests are amateurs. We, who accept jobs or orders to kill people, are professionals... That's why I don't kill casually. Killing without meaning or profit would make me a cheap killer, which I'm not. One look at my hidden weapons and it's obvious I'm no amateur, right?"

Eiri closed one eye while displaying her nail art.

Specialized weapons that amateurs would find difficult to wield, they felt like a natural fit for Eiri who was a professional killer. However, this also raised a question that was difficult to accept.

"Anyway, I understand that you're not an amateur but a professional killer--an assassin. Understanding is one thing... But then why are you in this kind of place? The Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation is an institution to reform convicted murderers, right? Isn't it weird to lock someone like you here?"

Kyousuke's question brought a bitter expression to Eiri's face.

After a brief silence, she turned her face away with displeasure.

"...Nothing much. The reason isn't anything huge. I simply screwed up. An ordinary person simply witnessed me then I was caught. About this, don't ask. --Got that?"

Eiri's half-opened eyes glared at him.

The strong gaze, impossible to ignore, made Kyousuke unable to question the matter any further.

"..."

"..."

A subtle silence descended between them--Just as Kyousuke thought that...

Behind the gym where there was no one but the two of them, the bell rang to signal the end of the lunch break.

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"...And so, this kind of system was established. Originally, the death penalty system was--"

"Sorry, I'm late."

Sliding the door open at the front of the classroom, Eiri stepped inside.

Instantly, Kurumiya's hand stopped from writing fluently on the board.

Listening to the lesson quietly, the students' gazes were drawn to the sudden intruders.

"Oh no... Eiri-chan." Maina's eyes widened in surprise.

Shinji, Usami and Oonogi had frozen expressions.

Without even looking at them, Eiri yawned and turned towards the unmoving Kurumiya.

"...During the lunch break, I rescued Kamiya-kun who was almost killed, then took him to the infirmary. That's why I'm late."

As though conjuring by magic, Eiri took out the deadly weapon from somewhere and threw it.

Rolling to the lectern behind Kurumiya, it was Shinji's revolver.

"Eeeeeeeeek!? A g-g-g-g-g-g-gun!?" Maina screamed madly, causing the uninformed students to riot. Surprise, shock, worry...

Even as murderers, it was probably the first time for many of them to see a real gun.

Amidst the clamor, Eiri questioned the unmoving Kurumiya in a curt and harshly accusatory voice:

"...Is it really okay to let this kind of toy circulate, Sensei? If you have the leisure to discipline people for lateness, shouldn't you put a little effort in this area as well? ...Luckily, Kamiya-kun ended up okay--Hey, what the fuck are you doing?"

Eiri turned around and frowned. Poking in from the door was a face covered with band-aids and gauze. Trying to observe the situation, Kyousuke was harshly glared at by Eiri, who then turned her gaze away.

"Oh sorry... But the way you're speaking, that's way too..."

Whether her arrogant attitude, accusatory tone of voice, everything was way too offensive to Kurumiya, right? Looking at Kurumiya who was for some reason showing no reaction to Eiri's words, Kyousuke was about to enter the classroom in trepidation when...

--Snap. The piece of white chalk in Kurumiya's hand broke in half like a bone fracturing.

"...I see. I understand your excuse. Yes, I understand very clearly."

Pulverizing the remainder of the chalk in her hand, Kurumiya looked at Kyousuke and Eiri.

Soon after, a creepy smile appeared on her cute face.

"...And then? Is that all you want to say?"

However, her expression instantly vanished. Kurumiya asked in a low, lolita voice.

Her other hand, untainted by chalk dust at all, had started holding a steel pipe at some point in time.

"Eh. This... Why is it discipline!? We're just victims--"

"...Yes, you are victims. Anything more to add?"

In contrast to Kyousuke who was retreating, Eiri took a great step forward and answered the eyebrow-twitching Kurumiya in her usual, calm voice:

"...Is there a problem? There's no problem. Kamiya-kun is late because he was almost killed by other students with the reason stemming from inadequate supervision from you and the teachers. If you want to discipline anyone, please first discipline that bunch of bastards who attacked Kamiya-kun."

"........Muu."

Faced with Eiri's fluent accusation, Kurumiya pouted in silence.

She looked like a child who was throwing a fit, wanting to buy a toy but refused by the mother.

(A-Amazing... This girl Eiri managed to suppress that Kurumiya.)

As expected of a professional killer. Her courage was off the charts.

Eiri looked down at the short Kurumiya and said:

"...Kamiya-kun is injured to begin with. Getting first aid treatment before reporting to class is only natural, right? I think that it's already quite amazing that he insisted on coming to class, dragging his injured body. Beaten up students basically don't come to class, right?"

Eiri shrugged and looked at the empty seat in the front row. At the desk and chair, which had already lost their original shapes, dried bloodstains were coated layer after layer, almost impossible to remove now. This was Mohican's seat. He had already been disciplined twice today, during the morning penal labor and third period, ending up in the infirmary twice.

When Kyousuke and Eiri went to the infirmary, Mohican was still unconscious, connected to an artificial respirator, lying on a sickbed, sleeping peacefully.

"Mohican eh... True. It's about time I consider killing him for real."

It looked like Kurumiya hated Mohican very much. Simply hearing his name made her face frown with displeasure. The pressure she exuded was slightly weakened.

Probably her anger directed towards Mohican--This was likely Eiri's plan.

"...Hmph. Fine. I'll let Kamiya off this time."

Hence, Kurumiya was finally persuaded.

Resting the steel pipe on her shoulder, she took a step back, yielding a path.

"Hey, hurry and sit down. Shortly after, I will go flatten those assholes who attacked Kamiya... Time is limited. Hurry and get back to class."

Seeing the gun rolling on the floor, Kurumiya spoke. Glancing sideways at Shinji and his groupies whose faces paled at Kurumiya's statement, Eiri's expression relaxed.

Just at this moment, when Eiri was about to pass by Kurumiya with a cold expression--

"Where are you going? I don't recall saying I'm letting you off, Akabane."

"...!?"

A violent voice. As Eiri halted in her steps, Kurumiya swung the steel pipe at her face.

No preparatory movement at all. A subsonic attack that could only be described as godlike in speed!

"--Tsk!?'

Eiri dodged by a paper-thin margin. Using the minimum movement of twisting her neck, Eiri evaded the steel pipe and closed in just as Kurumiya's arm swung, entering point-blank range.

".....What are you doing, Sensei?"

--Right hand's hidden weapon pressed to Kurumiya's neck, she asked in calm voice.

".....Hoh?"

Kurumiya's eyes widened, her stupefied face gradually bloomed in radiance.

As the classroom regained silence, Kurumiya's "kukuku" voice was heard again.

"Asking me what I'm doing? ...Amusing. How bold of you to use this thing to threaten the teacher while saying such nonsense. I should ask what are you doing? You must be prepared, I hope?"

Despite having a fingernail at her throat, despite noticing it as a murder weapon, Kurumiya remained unfazed, instead showing a strange gaze as though having caught her prey, looking up at Eiri.

"....."

In contrast, Eiri was speechless.

Faced with Eiri who was showing a nervous expression, Kurumiya announced in a confident and composed attitude:

"Kukuku... Whatever. This is a rare chance, so I'll give you three options. One... put down your hand obediently and let me discipline you. Two... I'll break your arm then discipline you. Three... Kill me directly and save yourself from being disciplined. --That's all. Nice options, eh?"

Upon hearing the third option, Eiri's eyes widened greatly.

Biting her lip hard, she glared at Kurumiya.

"...Kill the teacher? Don't make me laugh. If I did that, it's not going to end that easily--"

"No matter."

".....Huh?"

"Even if you kill me right here, you will not be punished at all. I die because I failed in my role as the supervisor, there are no consequences for you... What? There's nothing to worry about at all. After all, you can't possibly get killed by me without resistance. It should be very easy to handle if you explain clearly to the school. Everyone present is a witness, so don't hesitate--"

Kurumiya threw away her steel pipe and raised her arms high.

Expressing total nonresistance, she said in a strong, commanding tone of voice:

"Kill."

"...!?"

Instantly, Eiri's body twitched.

Visible even from far away, the finger pressed against Kurumiya's throat were trembling.

"What's the matter? Why are you afraid? Hurry and kill me if you want to kill. Just apply a little more force in your fingertip and slide, super easy, right? You are the Murderer of Six, aren't you? Kukuku..."

Kurumiya snickered maliciously while talking a river as though blackmailing.

"I... I..."

The rust-red eyes were wavering.

From between her pale lips, slight breathing escaped.

"What? What now, Akabane--Akabane Eiri. Would you like me to give you a push?"

Speaking in a weak voice, Kurumiya stepped forward. Without any hesitation, as though letting the fingernail that Eiri was pressing against her throat to bury itself into her flesh--

"Eh... Kyah!?"

Accompanied by a sharp and brief scream, Eiri withdrew her fingernail, tensed her body and seemed to be trembling.

Only after withdrawing her fingernail did Eiri suddenly come to her senses, staring at Kurumiya.

Due to how swiftly she withdrew her finger, a shallow and short wound was scratched across Kurumiya's throat.

Seeing this, relief appeared on Eiri's face, followed immediately by disappointment and despair.

"------"

"Hoh? I see... I see now. So this is your choice, Akabane?"

Kurumiya asked in a calm voice toward Eiri who was biting her lip hard.

The smile went from Kurumiya's face. Grabbing Eiri's right hand, she pulled her mercilessly towards her.

"So you're still a virgin huh--Rusty Nail."

"...!?"

After whispering in her ear, Kurumiya swung a karate chop at her belly.

Eiri screamed, her slender body bending over.

Next came the second strike immediately, Kurumiya's right knee went for her chin, kicking the off-balance Eiri flying away.

"Guh!?"

"Eiri!?" "Eiri-chan!?"

Kyousuke and Maina's voices overlapped.

Eiri fell on the floor, face up. A blunt sound was heard.

"Hey, you guys, shut up will you... Don't move. I'll kill you if you dare move."

Kurumiya's low voice stopped Kyousuke and Maina from rushing over in an instant.

She picked up the steel pipe with her right hand.

As Kyousuke and Maina gritted their teeth, watching, Eiri moaned where she fell. Kurumiya poked Eiri's face randomly with the front end of the pipe and said:

"Kamiya is wounded, so going to the infirmary is fine. I can let him off. ...But you, Akabane. What are you trying to pull by sticking to him on purpose? He doesn't look like he's too injured to walk on his own, is he...? Did you two go for some secret happy fun time together? Huh?"

"Huh!? W-What did you say... Guh!?"

Eiri screamed. Just as she was about to talk back, Kurumiya shoved the steel pipe into her mouth.

Eiri wanted to turn her face away but Kurumiya skillfully manipulated the pipe's sharp tip, pursuing her relentlessly, forcing her lips apart. Accompanied with painful breathing noises, the pipe was gradually getting wet from saliva.

"S-Stop... Muguu!? S-Stop... Muguu!?"

"Hey hey hey, what's up now? Your face is red. Are you a virgin in this area too? Kukuku... I get it. I will confirm it right now. If you're still 'pure' then I'll let you off since it proves that you weren't skipping class together with Kamiya, right?"

Kurumiya smiled malicioiusly while pulling the pipe out from Eiri's mouth.

Using the glinting weapon's front tip to point at Eiri's lower abdomen, Kurumiya prepared to shove it into her skirt.

"Eee!? S-Stop it... Ah--"

"Stop that, you psycho loli teacher."

Unable to bear watching any further without doing anything, Kyousuke grabbed Kurumiya's shoulder.

"...Loli?" Interrupted in her fun, Kurumiya's killing intent grew heavy.

"Kyou... Kyousuke..."

"Shut up."

Eiri got up, trying to say something, but Kyousuke kept his eyes on Kurumiya.

Confronting the cute child-like face that was displaying a vicious look, Kyousuke said forcefully:

"It's me. I'm the one who asked Eiri to send me to the infirmary. Eiri was the one who saved my life to begin with, there's no reason why she should be punished... If you want to punish someone, come for me, I'm the one to blame! If you want to discipline someone, come for me, you fucking bitch ass shrimpy hag!"

--The instant he yelled out, Kyousuke suffered a violent hit.

The steel pipe was swung forcefully from above his gauze-covered face.

"Gah!?"

Blown away, Kyousuke fell on the floor. It was a miracle that none of his teeth were broken.

Although it was his first time tasting Kurumiya's steel pipe, the impact was definitely not something that could be ignored.

Where did that powerful strength come from that slender arm?

"You must be tired of living, brat... Very well, I will grant you your death wish. Your corpse will be displayed as a warning to the masses."

"Guh!?"

Then his belly suffered an instantaneous hit. Luckily, he had not eaten anything for lunch.

Before the rampaging bitter gastric juices could spit out, another strike hit his flank.

Maybe a rib cracked--But before he could grasp the situation, another hit landed on his thigh.

Pain and scorching sensations rained down repeatedly, turning the world gradually red...

"Kyousuke!? H-Hey! Kyousuke--"

--Don't come here.

As his consciousness gradually grew hazy, Kyousuke squeezed the last of his strength out to tell Eiri to stop with a look from his eyes.

Kyousuke was given no time to see if Eiri stopped rushing forward. His view flipped. I guess my body is tilted? No idea? The body was blown away, the side of his head struck the wall violently. Even his sense of pain was numbed.

Countless countless countless countless times--Impacts came up down left right, intensely striking, his view shaking. This time, his consciousness gradually grew far away, devoured by dark crimson.

"Hmph... This is the end, Kamiya. Die."

--Smack.

A violent impact struck the side of his head.

The hazy world melted. Then...

"Kyousukeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!?"

In the darkness, someone screamed--Kyousuke's consciousness was cut off here.

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From the window fitted with metal bars, gentle sunlight streamed in.

On a bed in the quiet infirmary, Kyousuke regained consciousness.

Gazing at the stain-covered ceiling, he blinked several times.

Trying to confirm the situation, Kyousuke slowly sat up.

"......Kyousuke?"

A delicate voice came from nearby. Sitting on a pipe chair, Eiri looked at Kyousuke in surprise.

Her slightly moistened rust-red eyes were wavering in confusion.

"...It's okay for you to get up? ...You're able to get up?"

"Yeah. Ah, seems like I'm okay. After all, I'm used to it. Plus my body is strong to begin with."

Head, flank, limbs, every part of his body hurt without exception.

But for Kyousuke who was stuck in fights all year long with never an uninjured moment, this was nothing more than pain. Without any broken bones, or structural damage or missing parts, he was able to endure it.

Luckily, this was basically all blunt trauma without damage to nerves or bones.

Kurumiya probably held back. No matter how twisted in personality, Kurumiya was still a teacher. Despite saying 'kill' all the time, she could not possibly kill off a student for real so easily.

"Say, Eiri... Are you okay? Did she do anything to you after that?"

Kyousuke asked after adjusting his position. Eiri simply answered "...nothing much" and averted her gaze.

"...After you were sent to the infirmary, class went on as usual. There's nothing major whenever Mohican gets disciplined either, right? She didn't continue doing that to me, you know? ...Thanks to an idiot who rushed out from nowhere. So, umm.... Umm."

Face lowered, Eiri turned towards Kyousuke again.

Eiri looked like she had something to say, stammering, her lips moved slightly, her eyes rolling up in embarrassment.

"Th-Thank you, Kyousuke."

--A soft murmur. A stammering but gentle voice.

On Eiri's face, red as a cherry, her burning eyes gazed at him. Kyousuke felt his heart pounding violently.

This time, it was Kyousuke's turn to go "...N-nothing much!" and look away.

Because she suddenly changed her attitude from her usual, gruff ways, Kyousuke could not adjust. Eiri probably felt the same, both hands on her lap, saying not a word.

The atmosphere couldn't be more awkward.

Kyousuke frantically changed the subject.

"S-Say... Is it after school now?"

"......Yeah."

Eiri nodded, ending the dialogue.

"U-Umm... How about Maina and Renko? They didn't come with you?"

"...Yeah, I asked them to go first."

"Eh, I see... --Eh? Asked? You... Why are you acting so mysterious?"

"I have something I wanted to tell you... Privately."

Eiri answered firmly in a calm voice and looked up.

Looking at Kyousuke, the rust-red eyes were filled with strong determination and resolve.

"...Huh? Something you wanted to tell me? What is it? You even had to send them off..."

--As soon as he spoke, a certain possibility flashed across Kyousuke's mind, causing his heart to pound violently.

Kyousuke frantically looked across his surroundings. Containing a few medicine cabinets, sickbeds and medical equipment, the infirmary seemed to be empty of other people. The school nurse also seemed to be out.

The spring sunlight streamed into the room. Eiri placed her hand on the sickbed's edge.

"Actually, Kyousuke. I..."

"W-Wait! Wait, Eiri! I haven't prepared myself mentally yet--"

Ignoring the blushing and retreating Kyousuke, Eiri leaned forward.

"...have never killed anyone."

".....Huh?"

Eiri's unexpected "confession" caused Kyousuke's thought processes to stop.

--N-Never killed anyone? Eiri?

Impossible. That can't be right. I must have heard wrong.

If anything, the reason was because Eiri was a professional assassin.

"...Killing six people, that's all bullshit. I haven't killed a single person. Despite truly wanting to kill, I still couldn't kill any... That six is not a kill count but the number of people I failed to kill. My failures as an assassin..."

Up extremely close, Eiri was gazing into Kyousuke's troubled eyes, her lips curling.

A smile filled with self-mockery and abuse.

Pressing the fingernail of a murder weapon against Kyousuke's throat while he held his breath...

"...The Akabane family is a prestigious family with a long history in the field of assassination. Ever since childhood, I was strictly instilled with killing techniques while growing up... Hilarious, right? But to think I lack what's the most important--the courage to kill. But I still have many talents, which is why I was given so many chances... After every failure, I was dealt a harsh punishment. In the end, I still couldn't kill. Recently, in other words, during the sixth assassination, I screwed up most spectacularly and was finally witnessed by a normal person and ended up getting caught... Hence, I was thrown into this place in the form of exile from the Akabane family."

Eiri took her fingernail from Kyousuke's throat, biting her lip.

Using her other hand's fingertips to caress her red-painted nails, she said:

"...This gave me a nickname, the Rusty Nail. Instead of the color of blood, I am the color of useless rust. Red wings which are rusted--as a member of the Akabane family[6], what does it mean for red wings to be rusted? That means that in a proper and prestigious family, a defective product like me was born."

"Eiri, you..."

Eiri did not hide her embarrassment from Kyousuke and exhibited a weak expression and voice.

(...No way, right? This girl, so she's really never killed anyone before?)

When Kurumiya ordered her to kill, Eiri's reaction definitely wasn't that of a murderer's. Did she hesitate because the target was Kurumiya? This reason did not stand at all...

If she was simply fearing the act of killing itself, then the reaction was easier to accept.

Although easier to accept--

"Hey Kyousuke... Tell me. What must I do to be able to kill? Whenever I'm about to do the deed, I always think... About the target, about the people the target cares about, about the people who care about the target... Is it because of that? Even if I'm just killing one person, this person's death would probably make even more people suffer emotions worse than death... Perhaps pain, sadness, hatred--That's what I'm always thinking. Really in a very short amount of time, thinking nonstop thinking nonstop thinking nonstop thinking nonstop thinking nonstop... In the end, I failed to kill... I failed to steel my resolve."

Bowing her head deeply, Eiri gripped the bedsheet hard on the sickbed.

Her fingernails--a total of six swords--shredded the flimsy fabric, making it tattered and torn.

Finally, transparent liquid drops fell. Kyousuke could hear the sounds of forcibly suppressed sobbing.

"...Even so, in the final job, I still managed to cut open a spot near the target's vitals. I steeled my resolve and slashed the throat from behind. Warm blood flowed out stupidly, my mind went blank... I killed, but that was

just my stupid thinking. The instant I thought that, I lost consciousness. After that, just like I said during the lunch break, I was arrested. The target had survived. The Akabane family gave up on me... I was swallowed by the fear and self-contempt before killing someone, falling into an endless nightmare... As much as I'm embarrassed to admit, till now I've hardly slept at all."

Eiri mocked herself while wiping those usually half-open and sleepy eyes of hers.

Moistened with tears, her rust-red eyes wavered as though looking for support, once again, she looked at Kyousuke.

"Come on, Kyousuke... Tell me! You've killed twelve before, right!? Someone like you, so outstanding, surely you don't even blink when you strike, right!? How do you kill, tell me... Please. I can only ask you. Maina doesn't have any intent to kill to begin with, while Renko's background is totally unclear... So please, Kyousuke--Tell me, will you? Otherwise, I... raised for the sake of killing... I won't have any meaning of living anymore. Right?"

"....."

Kyousuke was at a loss for words. He stared silently at Eiri.

Casting aside the mask of the Murderer of Six, removing the title of the assassin, Eiri's true face was that of a frail girl. Those unnecessarily offensive behavior and attitude was probably a means to dispel unease and fear in order to accustom herself to an environment of murderers. In that case...

--Believing in Eiri's clear and flawless eyes that were washed clean by tears, Kyousuke firmed his resolve.

He decided to throw away his mask as well, presenting his true face in its full, original form.

"...Sorry, I can't do that, Eiri. I have nothing to teach you."

"Huh!? Why!? Why won't you teach me--"

"Because I haven't killed a single person either."

".....Huh?"

Eiri placed her hands on Kyousuke's shoulder and pulled herself near forcefully.

However, this movement stopped suddenly.

Making an expression of failing to understand, Eiri's mouth was opened, tongue-tied.

When Eiri made her "confession", Kyousuke must have made the same face.

Suddenly thinking of that, Kyousuke could not help but smile wryly and continued:

"Me killing twelve people... I was actually framed. I'm just an ordinary person who has a million hang ups against killing people. I'm just slightly strong at fighting, that's all. Although I've been hiding it all this time... I think it's okay for me to come clean if it's you."

"...Framed? ...Ordinary person? ...Just slightly strong at fighting?"

Surprise to puzzlement, then exasperation--or perhaps relief.

"...No way? At least the last bit is lying..."

"I'm not lying. It's all true. So, about killing people, I can't answer you at all. However--"

Kyousuke grabbed Eiri's hands on his shoulders and slowly pulled them away.

Glancing at the decorated fingernails, he spoke in an exceptionally forceful tone of voice:

"I can understand clearly how you feel about being unable to kill. Being forced to kill people despite being unwilling. Thinking over many things but still unable to deal the blow in the end? That's of course. Whether convicted murderers, professional killers, people who kill without thinking, those guys are just plain abnormal to begin with... Am I right?"

"You're wrong."

Eiri refuted firmly.

With eyes as sharp as blades, she stared at Kyousuke.

"...That's just the reasoning of the surface society, right? For the underside of society where I was nurtured, not being able to kill is abnormal. Reasoning, morals, truth that are opposite to those of the surface society. You and I live in completely different worlds. Different worlds, hence the values are..."

"Values? Those things should be the same. Abnormal as you are in the underside of society, aren't you normal in the surface society? No different from me... Besides, how about using this opportunity to be rehabilitated? Surviving three years here then leaving this place to go to the surface society--"

"Can't do it... I absolutely can't."

"Why not!? Your family gave up on you, right? Or is that the way it goes? ...They're unwilling to let go of someone who is familiar with the underside of society? It seems very difficult to quit."

"...Wrong. That's not what I mean. That's one of the reasons, but..."

Eiri turned her face away from Kyousuke and suddenly stopped.

"But?"

Eiri's gaze still avoided Kyousuke's body.

"...Hey Kyousuke, since you're framed on false charges, you'll be released, right? Have you thought about returning to your original world, returning to the same place as before? Living as the Mass Murderer of Twelve for the rest of your life after these three years, enduring endlessly... Even so, you still wish to return to where you belong?"

"--Yeah, that's right."

Kyousuke asserted. Recalling the image of the important family in his mind, he injected power into his voice.

Until he met Ayaka again and apologized to her, he was not going to submit. Giving up? Absolutely not.

"...I see."

Eiri's expression was shrouded with a layer of gloom. Whispering, she slowly lowered her eyelids.

Lips pursed tight, a deeply frowning brow, these all expressed her considerable hesitation.

Kyousuke waited for her silently. Ten seconds, twenty seconds, thirty seconds passed--

"...I understand. Then I'll tell you."

Eiri opened her eyes, giving off light that made Kyousuke hold his breath.

Inorganic, emotionless, harsh light. This gaze, honed and carved from ice, shot straight through Kyousuke.

"Let's start with the end result first... Even if you endure and survive these three years, you will not be able to return to the world you came from."

"......Huh? No wait, I can return, right? Because, this is a place for convicted murderers to reform--"

"--Wrong." Eiri interrupted Kyousuke.

As though chopping the spider's thread known as hope which stood as Kyousuke's only mental support in this hell-like purgatory steeped in murderers...

As though pushing Kyousuke into the deepest abyss in hell, Eiri announced the truth:

"The Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation is not a school for reforming convicted murderers... Instead, it is a specialized school for re-educating and correcting convicted murderers who have experience in killing--in order to cultivate them into professional killers."

# Period 5 - Purgatory's True Face and Rhapsody's Growl / "Lucifer in the Cocytus"

Q. What color panties are you wearing today?

A. You're dead.

# Lucifer In The Cocytus
# 氷東獄の素顔と、狂奏のグロウル

## 五時間目

Q.今日のぱんつは何色ですか？

A.死にさらせ。

"You said... The Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation is a specialized school for cultivating professional killers?"

Sunlight streamed in through the innermost window, illuminating the narrow room.

Standing in front of the office desk sandwiched between two bookshelves, a figure was smoking while asking.

Being back-lit, the figure's face could not be read. Nevertheless, it was probably a smile.

While Kyousuke was breathing irregularly, standing at the open doorway, the figure emitted a "kukuku..." sound.

"Where did you hear that from? Oh well, I can pretty much guess... Anyway, calm down first. You rushed over to find me as soon as you heard? Reviving so soon after being disciplined, my, aren't you a lively specimen of swine."

"...Stop jabbering nonsense and answer me quickly, Kurumiya."

Kyousuke growled while taking a step forward. His voice was filled with irrepressible rage.

The figure--Kurumiya--was right. As soon as Kyousuke heard it from Eiri, he ran directly out of the infirmary to question Kurumiya.

This place where Kyousuke had hurried to was on the fourth floor of the new school building, one of the staff rooms prepared for each individual teacher of the Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation.

Kyousuke had almost finished catching his breath when he threw out his question.

"Answer me, is what I heard true or false... Hurry up and answer me! Even if I graduate, I won't be sent back to the surface society, instead ending up on the underside, what the heck is up with that!?"

Faced with Kyousuke's violent voice, Kurumiya breathed out purple smoke.

Extinguishing the finished cigarette in an ashtray, she stood up.

"I must have said during the first lesson, didn't I, Kamiya? The Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation's purpose is to correct the twisted natures of convicted murderers so that they are reformed and rehabilitated."

Kurumiya slowly circled around the desk and walked towards Kyousuke.

Instead of the cigarette in her hand, she was now holding a steel pipe.

"...However."

Instantly walking over, Kurumiya looked up at Kyousuke.

Grinning mischievously, she looked like she was enjoying every single one of Kyousuke's reactions.

"I don't recall saying anything about being sent to the surface society after graduating. Because I hate lying... I only speak the truth. Brat, you're entirely correct--That's exactly what this school is."

"Ah!? You're shitting me!?"

The instant Kyousuke heard her, he grabbed Kurumiya by the collar.

Kurumiya's small and light body was lifted up.

Then Kurumiya's expression remained unchanged, staring at Kyousuke in amusement.

"Ohoh, so scary so scary... Kukuku. You're thinking about killing me, right? Oh well, it's not possible anyway. Because you don't have any experience in murder, brat."

"W-What? How the fuck do you know that--"

"By nature, humans are unable to to kill people."

Still held up in the air, Kurumiya's gaze did not budge an inch and her expression remained cheerful.

"This is one of the foundations established in killology. Animals engage in systematic activity to prevent the species from going extinct. In fact, when training soldiers capable of standing on the battlefield, one of the most important and tricky challenges can be said to be making them break past the barrier of 'killing their own kind'."

Kurumiya's profound smile carried viciousness.

From her grinning lips, eight teeth were shining brightly.

"But the murderers gathered here are different. They have already broken through the barrier. There are some who killed by chance, some who are

mentally ill or have natural dispositions, however... No matter what, once they break through once, the rest is simple afterwards--All we need to do is correct them to make them easy to command. They are human resources very suitable for serving as professional killers."

"Wha..."

The hands grabbing Kurumiya's collar gradually loosened, finally letting go.

Kyousuke stumbled backwards unsteadily, groaning in shock.

"What the... I can't believe it was for this purpose that murderers were..."

"Yes, indeed. That said, there are exceptions. The Rusty Nail who cannot kill despite being born in a family of assassins... As well as a cherry boy like you, Kamiya."

Kurumiya's comment prompted Kyousuke to realize something.

Since 'having experience in killing' was the prerequisite for gathering these students together, then there was no reason to lock Kyousuke in this kind of place. --But then, why?

"That's right, you haven't killed anyone. The charge of twelve murderers is just a setup, I knew it all along... Because the reason why you were framed, brat, was because our board chairman intentionally designed it for you."

"......Huh? What... What the fuck!? Why intentionally..."

"Kukuku... Isn't it obvious? Of course it's because of your unusual physical capabilities that you must be obtained even if false charges must be fabricated. Although you have yet to break past the barrier, this can be achieved through disciplining. For example, by creating situations by my design where you are cornered with absolutely no choice but to kill."

Suddenly, Kurumiya took out something from her front pocket and raised it up high.

The shining black luster and rugged outline. Kyousuke had seen this revolver before.

"...Pisses me off. Today was really such a shame. I was hoping you'd kill off one or two in self-defense when those murderers were trying to execute you privately, but... I never expected someone to interfere. I clearly put this

deadly weapon into circulation and yet those assholes are utterly useless. I can't believe they all submitted to the Rusty Nail's threats."

"...!? That fucking gun is your doing too, Kurumiya!?"

Kyousuke had been racking his brain, unable to understand how anyone could spread this large number of deadly weapons--

So it was done by teachers rather than students. This was getting ridiculous without bounds.

Kyousuke wanted to grab and pick up Kurumiya again, but she went "okay okay" in an appeasing manner.

"Well, wait up. Calm down. Although I'm a teacher, I am only at the lowest level of the hierarchy, you know? I only follow orders from above, so hate the school's board chairman if you want to hate someone. Also... hate yourself. Hate your over excessive physical capabilities and your own folly for causing so much trouble that even the underside society learned of your power... Yes, Slayer and Megadeath Kyousuke."

"Guh...!?"

At this moment, his finger reaching for Kurumiya's collar stopped. Kyousuke gritted his teeth hard.

The enemies that Kyousuke had made to this point did include more than delinquents and hooligans. There was no lack of yakuza and gangsters as well. There were most likely many who had intimate connections with the underside society.

"...It's my fault?"

He had started getting into fights in the beginning to protect his precious family. Then without realizing it, getting too deep in fights, he had brought this hopeless situation upon himself...

In the end, the one who got hurt was Ayaka, the person he hoped to protect the most, as well as himself. Because Kyousuke had not grasped or used his power correctly.

"I can't believe you said it's my fault... Damn it."

Kyousuke gritted his teeth and clenched his fist tight.

Right now, that was all he could do. Kyousuke did not know if he should blame anyone. Having lost direction, his intense emotions spun in circles in his brain.

--Just at this moment.

"Oh, right, right... There's one more thing I forgot to tell you."

Kurumiya spoke quietly.

"...What?"

Kurumiya smiled sadistically towards the frowning Kyousuke.

"It's about the facade of the 'Mass Murderer of Twelve' that you were forced to put on. This was originally a facade meant for someone else. Also, that person is a psycho killer who takes abnormal joy in killing, flinching not the slightest be it killing dozens or hundreds of victims... Do you know who I'm talking about, Kamiya?"

"...Huh? Who cares! How would I know!?"

Mental illness that made it possible to kill hundreds without flinching, how could he possibly guess who it was?

If anything, that Bob might be about right--but no matter how Kyousuke thought about it, that monster probably hasn't killed hundreds.

Seeing Kyousuke unable to answer, Kurumiya looked disappointed.

"...Hmm, I see. You have no idea. But it's a girl whom you've been getting along on friendly terms ever since you came here. Kukuku... Okay, I might as well tell you if you don't know. On that day, taking those twelve men you had beaten up in the empty warehouse, cutting them up, breaking, crushing, tearing, slicing, toying, dissecting them, killing then killing then killing then killing then killing then killing them again and again, the perpetrator of the mass murder--"

Kurumiya's round, widened eyes suddenly narrowed.

Then Kyousuke heard it.

In a certain sense, it was the name he did not want to hear the most.

"--Hikawa Renko. The girl who's always friendly with you, wearing a gas mask. She is Murder Made, the killing mechanism that has innumerable

killing experiences. Not just in the class but also across the entire year group, she is the number one Killing Machine."

× × ×

--Liar.

Rushing out the emptied new school building, Kyousuke roared madly.

--Liar liar liar liar liar liar liar liar liar, liar!

How could that Renko be a psycho killer who kills hundreds without even flinching?

Absolutely impossible. This cannot be true. He did not wish for it to be so.

'Well, why don't you ask her directly? She's currently on the roof, you know? Kukuku...'

As soon as Kurumiya's words reached him, Kyousuke immediately rushed out of the staff room.

Sprinting, Kyousuke could even feel his madly beating heart hurting.

(No way, Renko... Tell me that this is all a lie! Like usual, just laugh heartily towards me!)

The closer he reached his destination, the stronger his suspicions towards Renko became.

The girl with the unknown background and wearing a gas mask twenty-four hours a day.

Her true identity and true nature--Kyousuke had no idea.

Even if behind that friendly easygoing attitude were eyes flashing viciously with murderous intent, even if behind that "foosh" laughing mask was a face twisted with insanity, Kyousuke had no way of knowing.

"Huff... Huff... Sigh... Huff..."

Standing in front of the metal door at the destination, Kyousuke adjusted his breathing.

The steel-colored door had the words "Entry Forbidden" written in red paint. This was the entrance to the new school building's roof. Not locked. Kyousuke placed his hand on the handle and resolved himself to push the door open.

Instantly, light flooded in. Under the gray blue sky, he turned his neck, looking for Renko.

However, in this cramped space enclosed by metal fencing and barbed wire, there were no signs of anyone apart from Kyousuke.

"...Renko? Are you here? Hey, Renko!"

Calling out her name, he walked to every nook and cranny but could not find Renko.

"...Sheesh, what the heck. That girl's not here..."

It looked like things had escaped Kurumiya's expectations.

Feeling a mixture of relief and disappointment, Kyousuke exhaled, relaxing his nervous emotions--Just at this moment...

"Oh, sorry sorry. It seems like I made you wait? Foosh."

The voice came from near the door.

Kyousuke was grabbing the fencing in front of him. He hastily turned around.

"I have heard from Kurumiya-san about what happened. You seem to have something to ask me?"

--No different from usual, Renko was standing there.

Casually talking to him in an aloof manner, it was the girl in the black gas mask.

Staring at the frozen Kyousuke who did not respond, Renko went "mm-hmm..." and emphasized her bulging bosom.

"By the way, the cup size is G! Foosh. Kyousuke, that must be your question, right? I was thinking that this kind of question is difficult to bring up, so I stole ahead to tell you first, Kyousuke. Since it's a rare chance, let me tell you all three sizes as well? Going from up to down, bust is--"

"Renko."

"Hmm? What's the matter? You're making such a scary face. Like you're going to attack me, you... Ha! Is that why you picked such a deserted place, Kyousuke, so that you can do this and that to me--"

"--Renko!"

Kyousuke could not help but roar angrily. As Renko exclaimed "Uwah!?" in surprise, he faced off with her, staring at her gas mask.

"...Stop joking arond. That's not the kind of thing I want to ask you."

In order to calm himself, Kyousuke took a deep breath and poured power into his fist.

Renko also seemed to read the mood, sighing "shuko..." and obediently stopped talking.

The sun was beginning to set. The rays of dusk illuminated the rooftop.

In this world, gradually turning orange, Kyousuke asked:

"Hey Renko--Is it really true that you've killed hundreds of people?"

"....."

A subtle silence was spreading.

Soon, Renko tilted her head in puzzlement.

"Hundreds? Sorry, Kyousuke. No idea... I'm not too sure myself."

Putting her fingertips at the chin area of her mask, Renko answered in a quiet murmur.

"The number of people I've killed to this date, I haven't been counting them one by one. Even if you ask me 'have you killed hundreds?' I can't answer very well. However, there's one thing I can be sure of..."

Renko paused at this point and pulled her hood back.

Her silver hair scattered lightly, fluttering in the wind.

"I am more able to kill than anyone in this school... Better than anyone at killing. Do you know why? Because I was made this way. In other words, I am--"

Renko took off her blazer and parka, leaving just a tank top.

Her exposed arms were almost entirely covered with pitch-black tribal tattoos.

Lines of various thicknesses were woven together to form complicated tattoos, looking like heavy shackles.

"--Murder Made. A being where killing has been designed on a DNA level. Like scissors created for the purpose of cutting paper, like hammers created to hammer nails, like guns created to shoot and kill people... I who was created cannot do anything apart from killing. Killing due to hate, killing due to sadness, killing due to joy, killing due to loneliness, killing due to emptiness, killing due to pain. I don't quite understand it, but I kill people anyway. Kill on whim, kill in any case. Kill kill kill kill kill kill kill kill, killing nonstop... Because each and every emotion of mine is tightly linked to killing behavior. --If this gas mask were absent."

Singing a song, Renko took off her headphones.

Throwing away the rugged black device, her pale and beautifully-shaped ears were exposed.

Then Renko finally placed her hands on the mask. Moving them to the back of her head, she released the securing band, meanwhile sighing "shuko..."

"This mask is the limiter my creator equipped me with. It suppresses all my actions and the necessary causes related to murder--A device for suppressing murderous intent and the impulse to slaughter. In other words, I can be like a normal girl as long as I'm wearing this mask... However, since you said you wanted to know the real me, Kyousuke, I think it's okay to tell you. Normally, of course I won't take it off... But this once, I will open this lock specially just for you, Kyousuke."

"R-Renko..."

Kyousuke backed away, his back bumping into the metal fencing behind.

Seeing Kyousuke trembling from instinctive fear, Renko smiled--It felt like she was smiling.

"Carrying all these numerous feelings until now, I can finally act upon them this time... This kind of feeling is a first. I am interested in you, I have fallen incurably for you, I cannot shift my attentions away from you. My mind is

completely filled with you. I want to understand more about you and help you understand more about me. I like you, Kyousuke... I love you! So--"

I want to try experiencing the instant when these feelings are connected to murder.

Renko whispered. Immediately.

--Rustle. The sound of the securing band released.

Released from its restraints, the black mask was instantly tossed onto the floor.

Renko's true face revealed--was so beautiful that it was mesmerizing.

"....."

Kyousuke watched, bewitched, drawn to her eyes.

With a blood-colored sky as the background, her long silver hair fluttered lightly.

Pale white skin like porcelain, glistening like water beneath the sunset.

Gentle, slender, exquisite eyebrows, quietly closed eyes, eyelashes long enough to produce shadows, a straight and high nose bridge, gorgeous lips of light pink... Everything was beautiful beyond compare, sublime and seductive.

Who knew if this could be called functional beauty, if the limits of human technology were exhausted in pursuit of beauty, perhaps such a face could be possible to make--Kyousuke thought.

"...Ren... ko...?"

As though reacting to the name escaping Kyousuke's lips, Renko's eyelashes quivered slightly.

Her eyelids opened slowly, displaying her originally closed eyes to the world.

Infinitely approaching transparency, ice-blue eyes resembling glaciers wandered their gaze in midair, capturing Kyousuke.

--Instantly.

"...Fufu."

A breath of life. The light pink lips traced out curves of joy.

The ice-blue eyes narrowed in a straight line. Renko's true face opened her mouth.

Without the mask, her clear and beautiful voice was delivered directly, so beautiful that it made Kyousuke shiver.

"What's the matter, Kyousuke? Do you like my real face? ...Fufufu. I can't stop laughing, can't stop the music... I am so happy that I'm going mad! Oh I'm so happy, Kyousuke. I never knew that showing you my real face is so happy... Fufufu. Wonderful, this must be the initial impulse. Rising straight up from the lower abdomen, rushing nonstop! Is this the melody of murder for which I will play for you? Fu, ufufu..."

The surging laughter caused her shoulders to shake. Closing her eyes again, Renko began to sway her body.

Her neck bobbed up and down while her body rocked left and right. It looked like she was following a rhythm, counting the beats.

Even removing the headphones was fine, even if there was no music it was fine.

Renko's incomprehensible behavior was making Kyousuke break out in sweat.

"...Huh? Uh, hey... What are you talking about? I don't get it, Renko...?"

Faced with Kyousuke's wavering, Renko opened her eyes and laughed.

"Fufu... Hmm? Oh, it's nothing major. To me, killing intent is music and the music is starting to play, that's all. Can't you hear it, Kyousuke? ...Or perhaps, this music--death metal, you've never heard it before? Doesn't matter, I will play the music so don't you worry about it. Whether death voices, shouts or growls, I will play everything for you... Allow the rhythms of murderous melody to be composed and played hand on hand for you! Aha, that's what's going on, yes--"

Renko clasped her fingers together and raised them over her head, moaning in a seductive manner.

Puffing out her massive bosom, further emphasizing it more and more, the tank top was stretched tight.

Releasing her arms that were stretched to her limits behind her back, she leaned forward.

As the tattoo-covered arms casually lowered, her ice-blue eyes opened in an exaggerated manner. Like a rainbow center on the surface of a clear blue lake--Dark pupils, like a cat's, were glaring intently intently intently at Kyousuke.

The corners of her lips, rising in a grin, revealed exceptionally sharp canines. In the next instant--

"MC a bit, will you? Let this live performance begin, Kyousukeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!?"

Turning into a beast, she screeched with savagery.

Kicking the ground, Renko's silver hair fluttered as she pounced.

× × ×

Evading this attack was probably purely out of luck.

As soon as she leaped, Renko tore through the air, spinning as she flew towards Kyousuke.

She had started a silver-white storm. This was totally not an action a human could perform, it was like a four-legged beast.

The five meters that Kyousuke had pulled back was instantly reduced to zero. Jumping power beyond normal parameters.

Diagonally above, at extremely close range, her right arm swung down in an arc.

"...Ku!?"

Falling over sideways, Kyousuke just barely dodged.

Less than a second later, Kyousuke heard a strange cracking sound where he was just standing.

A faint fragrance of soap as well as a concentrated smell of rust was carried by the wind. Smells so good.

"...Huh? Weird. You dodge it... Well done, Kyousuke. Fufufu."

Renko laughed happily while slowly straightening her posture.

From the flattened, twisting fencing, she pulled out her arm, lightly waving the bloody wrist.

It was not Kyousuke's blood but her own. Her right palm seemed to be bleeding.

"Also, ah~... Too exciting, I totally couldn't control my strength! If I focus too hard, I might end up smashing my hand. After all, my design principles are based on murder so I'm unable to destroy anything harder than bone. Fufu... Oh well, whatever."

Killing intent was making her body sway. Renko laughed happily.

It looked like she did not feel the pain in the slightest.

Landing on his ass slightly further away, Kyousuke looked up at Renko in surprise.

"W-What the heck... What are you... No way... You're not human at all?"

His view was stuck on the crushed part of the metal fencing which was spectacularly flattened.

If that kind of attack had struck, even if he did not die immediately, it would still be fatal.

Renko stood over Kyousuke, looking down at him, licking her bloody right hand.

Renko's tip of the tongue crawled over her tattoo then lifted up. This sensual display caused Kyousuke to tremble in reaction.

"Of course~, Kyousuke, you're so mean... I am human, although not a natural product. Rather, it's you, Kyousuke, your reactions are quite sharp. I am falling more and more in love with you... Mmmhmmhmm. My killing intent is firing up so let me hear more of the wonderful vocals of struggling moaning, shall we? I will give you a good loving!"

Finished licking her blood, Renko lifted her right arm, not caring about her wound at all.

With a dazed expression, she allowed the silent murderous impulse to drive her body as it pleased.

Contrasting with the sky that seemed like it was burning, her silver-white hair and the colorful brightness of the ice-blue eyes filled with madness, the sight was so beautiful that it was suffocating.

So that's what it's like--Even with death drawing near, Kyousuke's feelings were still so calm. Neither trembling from fear or submitting from despair, he simply stared at her in mesmerization, overwhelmed by her.

Renko's face turned mildly red, baring her fangs, smiling:

"Kyousuke, will you let me kill you? This time, I won't miss... Definitely won't miss."

--Kyousuke was unable to move.

Despite knowing he was about to be killed, his body did not accept his orders.

Pressed into her wrist, her fingers sank into the flesh as Renko clenched her fist tightly.

The tattoos crawling all over her arm like some kind of chain seemed to be rattling loudly.

--Just at this moment.

"Kyousuke!?"

"Kyousuke-kun!"

Two urgent voices tore through the air.

Eiri and Maina had appeared at the open metal door.

"Ah, jeez! What the heck!? Interrupting my concert, this damn noise--"

Putting down the right fist that was raised over her head, Renko turned around.

Then in the instant she confirmed the two figures, joy began to spread rapidly across the side of her face.

Her narrowed eyes opened up to become round, the corners of her lips rising.

"...Ah. What, isn't this Eiri and Maina? Yahoo~ Both of you! You came at the right time. Concerts do need an audience after all. Yes!"

"Eh... Could this be Renko? ...Are you Renko?"

Looking alternately at the gas mask on the floor and the silver-haired beauty, Eiri stared wide-eyed.

Maina also looked at Renko's true face, dumbfounded.

Probably pleased with these reactions, Renko laughed joyfully.

"Fufu, right, I am Hikawa Renko! Now you finally understand that I'm a beautiful girl? So happy... I'm so happy! However, I'm currently busy so I'll kill you later. Could you please watch for now?"

As soon as she finished, she turned to Kyousuke again.

"Huh!?" Eiri exclaimed violently.

"You're saying you're busy? What are you doing to Kyousuke!?"

As Eiri took a large step forward, her rust-red eyes burned with flames of wrath.

Ahead of her penetrating and forceful gaze was Renko's blood-dripping right hand.

"And you even said... you'll kill us? What kind of fucking joke is that?"

Stepping across the gas mask, Eiri walked quickly.

The blood was apparently rushing to her head, preventing her from noticing how weird Renko was acting.

"This... idiot! Don't come over! Hurry and escape--"

"--So noisy."

As though crushing Kyousuke's yell, Renko's growling was heard.

Like the heavy, low sound of bass drums, it rushed straight from the bottom of her abdomen.

A sound as though made by anger and hatred smashing through limits.

Renko's attention left Kyousuke as she turned to Eiri again.

The last face Kyousuke saw was expressionlessness with the earlier smilng face completely wiped off.

"...Ah. What are you doing, Eiri? My murderous intent is getting disrupted by murderous intent... The already playing melody is getting washed apart by other melodies. The beat was so good, but the song is interrupted halfway, forcing a new tune to be played, that so pisses me off--Terrible! Playing this exploding sound, is it ire? Tyrannical riffs and blast beats... Hmm. I'm already tired of this kind of killing intent... I have to stop it now..."

Shaking her head up and down, swaying her body from side to side, Renko walked towards Eiri.

From her dangling fingertips, droplets of blood dripped from time to time, leaving red stains on the floor.

"...Huh? W-What are you doing...? I don't get it, I completely don't get what you mean."

Despite feeling troubled by Renko's unusual atmosphere, Eiri did not falter.

Her grim eyes gave off the light of caution while she exhibited fortitude.

To protect Maina who was utterly scared at the door, Eiri glared at Renko.

"So what about killing intent? What about melodies? ...What are you muttering about, wha...?"

Suddenly, Eiri was speechless.

Entering into her view what was behind Renko--the twisted, flattened fencing made of steel.

Her gaze swept over the splatter of blood and the signs of destruction. After comparing them to Renko's right hand, Eiri's face was greatly alarmed.

On her impatient face, fear appeared for the first time.

"You hand... No way... Impossible? That's metal fencing... To think..."

Her voice trembled as she stepped back.

Renko stopped walking before Eiri and lowered her stance slightly.

"You think it's impossible? In that case..."

Kicking the ground, Renko rushed explosively, closing in instantaneously.

"Then try it with your body!"

--Slam! Her left hand chopped.

"...!?"

A strike capable of lopping off a head, however, it only managed to tear through empty space.

Thanks to amazing dynamic vision and reflexes, Eiri managed to duck down swiftly.

"Oh my oh my... Oh dear? Dodged? Oh dear~?"

Unable to pull back her excessive momentum, Renko spun around like a comet's trajectory, tilting her head in puzzlement.

With finger against her lower lip, Renko's eyes wandered in puzzlement.

"...Don't move."

Reaching out from behind, bright red fingernails were pressed against her throat.

The fingernail sword "Scarlet Slicing"--hidden weapons, Japanese swords, concealed by Eiri as a professional assassin.

"...I'll slit your throat if you dare move. No matter how powerful you are as a monster, you'll still die immediately from a sharp cut to your neck, right? ...Hmph. Too careless, how sad."

Using the opening when Renko had lost balance to circle behind her, Eiri whispered in Renko's ear.

Renko's ice-blue eyes widened then she smiled radiantly. "...Fufu."

"Yes, that's right... How sad. --Of course, you're the sad one, you know?"

Grabbing Eiri's right arm that was threatening her with the fingernails, Renko pulled without hesitation.

"...Wha!?"

The excessively bold action caused Eiri to waver. Seizing this opening...

"Gaha!?"

Renko's megaton punch struck Eiri in the chest.

Eiri's slender body was blown away in an exaggerated manner, then collapsed on the floor.

"Eiri!?" "Eiri-chan!?"

Kyousuke and Maina screamed together.

"...~~~~~~~~~~~~~~!?"

Probably due to the impact, Eiri was unable to breathe. Despite her usually cold attitude, Eiri was showing a convulsive expression, tears appearing in the corners of her eyes, she looked like she was in great pain.

Glancing at Eiri as she held her chest, on all fours on the ground, trying to gasp for oxygen, Renko pouted. As though chastising an ignorant child, she said:

"Seriously! This won't do. Don't threaten others if you clearly don't have the resolve to kill. Your blade was one centimeter off from the position of the carotid artery, you know? I know you don't want to hurt me, but your naive consideration makes me even more angry. Fufu... I knew it, Eiri is so nice. So kind and adorable! I love you so much, in a different meaning from Kyousuke, I love you. So--"

Renko's face suddenly filled with joy.

Lifting what extended out from under her pleated skirt, clad in leggings...

"You've caused me to want to make this melody of murder intense! Ufufu... Come, let's sing a song?"

--She kicked.

The tip of her foot invaded the space between the ground and Eiri's abdomen like a sliding baserunner.

"Uguu!?"

Eiri gave out a muffled scream then convulsed all over, falling on the concrete floor. From all fours, Eiri was now lying on her back, struggling like a fish on dry land while the white indoor shoe continued to step on her belly.

"Yes yes, not bad... This is really not bad! Wonderful screaming~, Eiri~..."

Renko rested her hand on her knee, pinning Eiri's body firmly to the ground while she murmured in ecstasy.

Casually looking at Eiri's face that was filled with pain and terror, Renko continued:

"However, isn't this sound too clear? ...Let's have a bit more dirty and chaotic screaming! This time, it's a growl~ A very moving sound. The designers called it this... Oh my? You've never heard it before? Then I'll tell you! --Come, cry out."

Renko's fang flashed as she laughed cruelly.

Moving her foot near Eiri's chest, then she placed her entire weight there all at once.

Crack crack crack--there was what sounded like bones fracturing.

"Gah. Gahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!?"

Eiri's screams were ear-splitting.

Tears were flowing out of her eyes, opened to their limits. She spat blood while hoarse screams spewed randomly from the corners of her mouth. Eiri's usual composure and resilience were blown away entirely.

Eiri's true face, delicate and fragile, the one she had shown to Kyousuke in the infirmary, was being trampled helplessly by a storm of pain, fear and humiliation.

--Seeing her like that, Kyousuke's image of Ayaka overlapped.

"...Stop this fucking nonsense."

Eiri's image as superimposed with how Ayaka was bullied by despicable classmates in the past.

After finding out that the cheerful and sunshine-like Ayaka was crying alone in the night, Kyousuke had resolved himself to be stronger than anyone.

In order to protect Ayaka's smile, in order to prevent the people who were precious to him from experiencing such sadness again, Kyousuke had resolved himself to become stronger than anyone. However...

"What the fuck, damn it... Why are you trembling, Kamiya Kyousuke?"

--Doesn't that fist of yours, honed and trained through countless trials till now, exist solely for times like these!?

Kyousuke cursed at himself. Within the blink of an eye, his body regained its freedom.

He felt as though something in his heart was melting, breaking apart and burning up.

Intense emotions, totally incinerating his fear, trepidation, confusion and hesitation, this was precisely the hellfire burning due to his anger and resentment towards himself and towards Renko.

"...Ah crap. Looks like I can't hold back anymore."

Kyousuke whispered and stood up.

Clenching the fist that crushed all within it, he stepped forward fearlessly.

"Eeeeeeeeeeeee!? Eiri-chan, Eiri-chan is!!!? Awawawa."

As Maina scurried left and right in a panic, still stepping on Eiri, Renko noticed Kyousuke approaching and cocked her head in puzzlement.

"What's the matter, Kyousuke? I'm sorry, I'm currently playing a song with Eiri... I'll be your opponent for as long as you like later, so don't be impatient. Listening to the death metal of Eiri's death cry, the musical instrument waiting for me to play in the near and immediate future, I am so happy. This moment, I can feel the music playing strongly! Ufufu."

"......Renko."

Kyousuke placed his hand on her bare shoulder and called her name.

The clear ice-blue eyes showed surprise as though intense sparks were about to erupt.

"What now, Kyousuke? What a serious look on your face... Oh! Could it be that you'd like a threesome--"

"--Shut up."

Clenching his fist tight, Kyousuke sent a straight punch right into the giggling face.

"Bu!?"

Suffering the merciless blow, Renko's body was blown away spectacularly.

Curling into a mass, the body spun through the air, striking the concrete floor. Then after an intense bout of rolling, it struck the other side of the fencing in a violent crash, then stopped moving.

"Awawawawawawa... Hmm?" Maina's voice suddenly stopped. Silence descended.

Renko's body leaned against the metal fencing, her head hug low, her face out of view.

"...Knocked out? I think... she's knocked out."

Relaxing his clenched fist, Kyousuke exhaled. The sensation of hardness his hand felt was no less than that of iron and steel.

Despite being a girl, she was a veritable monster. Had he shown any mercy, the consequences would have been unthinkable.

Seeing Renko not climbing back up, the punch definitely did its job as usual. Kyousuke said a simple "...sorry" to Renko then knelt down beside Eiri.

"Hey. Are you okay, Eiri? ...Tsk. Looks like you were tormented too much, you're almost a goner."

"Huh? I-I'm not a goner at all! W-What are you suddenly talking about--Guh!?"

"Idiot, don't force yourself! You broke a few ribs. Can you stand?"

"Ooh... Don's say something so weird! ...Y-You go and die!"

Eiri turned her face away and scolded.

But even so, she still leaned her shoulder honestly against Kyousuke. She seemed quite drained.

"Eiri-chaaaaaaaaaaaaan!? A-A-A-A-A-Are you okaaaaaay!?"

After a while, Maina ran over.

Seeing Kyousuke help Eiri to her feet, she covered her mouth and went "awawawawa."

Faced with the panicking Maina, Eiri spoke with her usual ice-cold voice.

"...It's nothing. It doesn't hurt at all, you know?"

"Eeeeeh!? But but! Eiri-chan, you're still crying--"

"Huh!? I-I'm not crying!"

...Hmm? It looked like there was still lingering pain. Maina carefully examined Eiri's face that was frowning to hide her crying. "I knew it, you're crying... Don't force yourself!" Maina still continued to worry. Thanks to that, Eiri's face went red all the way to her ears.

"...Umm, sorry, Maina. Can you take Eiri to the infirmary first?"

"Eh...? I don't mind... But what about you... Kyousuke-kun...?"

Maina cautiously received Eiri from Kyousuke and desperately supported her while asking:

"Me? I--"

Kyousuke was just about to answer when...

"...Pu... Pupu... Puha... Ahahahahhahaha!"

The sound of laughter spewing out.

"Eeee!?" Maina cried out in fear. "...Urgh." Eiri groaned timidly.

Leaning against the fencing, head hanging, Renko's shoulders were trembling.

"Oh my... That's amazing of you, Kyousuke. I can't believe you hit a girl's face so hard... Ufufu. How terrible. Super terrible! What the heck is up with my brain, for such powerful killing intent to be ringing... This blast beat, it's my first~ time hearing it~ So shocking, I'm stunned. But so happy! ...Oh my? Why am I happy about this? Ludicrous! So I'm actually an M, a super masochist!? Ahahahahahahahahahahahaha!"

Completely recovered, Renko roared with laughter at the sky.

Her pale, white and beautiful face, like a nightmare, was unbelievably showing not a single scratch or wound.

After suffering the merciless strike, blown away squarely, she ended up unharmed.

"Hey hey hey... What the fuck. Is your fucking body made of superalloy?"

"K-K-K-K-Kyousuke-kyun! H-Hurry and escape... Hurry and escape!?"

Maina tugged at Kyousuke's shirt hem with one hand while her teeth chattered crisply in fright.

"Kyousuke..." Eiri's voice trembled, her face livid.

Facing these two girls, Kyousuke--

"...I'll leave Eiri to you, Maina. I'll be this girl's opponent."

Kyousuke pulled Maina's hand off him, stroked Eiri's hair then faced off against Renko.

"Huh!?" Eiri's voice went violent in reaction to Kyousuke shielding and protecting the two of them.

"Don't be stupid... Do you want to die!? How are you going to fight her on your own!?"

"T-That's right! Even if it's you, Kyousuke-kun, against the current Renko-chan..."

"...Don't worry. Even if I can't defeat her, I won't get killed so easily. I am quite confident in my resilience. So, I'm leaving Eiri to you now, Maina... Please! Then hurry and call for help, as quickly as possible. I'll stall for time... and survive in the meantime."

Saying that, he laughed fearlessly. "Kyousuke-kun..." Maina sobbed while crying Kyousuke's name.

--Clearly, if no one occupied Renko, everyone was going to be killed.

Before reinforcements came, this approach must be firmly maintained, whether for five minutes, ten minutes or even longer.

The only one capable of this task was no one but Kyousuke.

"Hey, hey, Kyousuke~ Don't just talk to those two, chat with me too. Let's chat together, play together, frolic together... to play all sorts of sounds, shall we? I will let you hear many sounds so let's play a symphony for each other! A sweet, beautiful and intense, screaming rhapsody of death! Come... Fufufu."

Renko bounced up without using her hands, her ice-blue eyes flashing.

Enduring that gaze filled with mad joy, Kyousuke answered:

"Fine... No helping it, I will play with you, Renko."

As the tension kept climbing, Maina repositioned herself to better support Eiri's body and walked to the door.

She apparently understood Kyousuke's good intentions. While thanking Maina in his heart, Kyousuke felt gratitude towards her.

"Kyousuke."

Before leaving, Eiri called out to Kyousuke.

Seeing Kyousuke stare straight ahead without looking back at all, she said in praying voice:

"...If you die, I'm going to kill you, got that?"

Hearing an Eiri-style barbed show of care, Kyousuke's face relaxed its expression.

"...Idiot. How do you kill a dead person? Besides, you can't even kill a living one."

Kyousuke smiled wryly while responding. The two girls had already disappeared from the roof.

"Okay... Sorry for making you wait, Renko."

Kyousuke put his expression away and switched his mental state.

The fear circuits in his brain had already burned up completely a long time ago.

Using all sorts of feelings required to survive, they were ground to the limit.

"...Hmm. Finally back to private time between the two of us. Jeez, Kyousuke, you're too popular~ I'm so jealous! --Aha. I finally understand the feelings of the little girls who oppose me. I see now... This is the melody of jealousy huh. Oh my... How wonderful~ Super cool! You have aroused complicated murderous intent in me, turning into everchanging melodies... Wonderful, I'll never tire of listening to them. I want to listen to more and more, play more and more of this music! Play, play, play, be played then play ... I want to savor the best outro! So, Kyousuke..."

Beneath the burning sky, Renko began to dance, causing her silver hair to flutter.

Driven by the killing intent that only she could hear, she lowered her stance greatly.

--An instant later.

"Let us kill each other, shall we!?"

Roaring from the innermost depths of her being, Renko kicked the ground.

With murderous intent overflowing form her ice-blue eyes, she charged in a straight line.

In the very depths of Kyousuke's spinning mind--He seemed to hear unfamiliar music coming from somewhere.

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"I love you I love you I love you to death, Kyousuke! Kyaha!"

The clear and bouncing voice was accompanied by a loud noise. Her left arm was swung with full strength.

Lowering his stance, evading this strike with the smallest movement, Kyousuke instantly countered with a left uppercut aimed at Renko's lower jaw. However, Renko leaned her upper body back and dodged.

"Heh, so that's it!? Thank you... Hmm!?"

An instant followup. The readied right fist went straight for Renko's nose.

Then Renko arched her upper body backwards greatly, almost parallel to the ground.

"What...!?"

The unexpected move caused Kyousuke's fist to fly into empty space, past the silver strands of hair. --Instantly.

"Gotcha~" Kyousuke's extended arm was swiftly entangled by Renko.

Treating the entangled arm as a pole, Renko spun in the air by kicking the ground to use the reaction force to propel herself, using Kyousuke's shoulder to land. Her supple thighs now clamped Kyousuke's neck from both sides.

"Hey!? W-What's this move--"

"--Crack, there goes your neck! Okay, you're dead. You've already died once, Kyousuke. Ufufu."

Holding Kyousuke's head in her arms, Renko twisted her waist in the opposite direction.

In actual fact, she only pretended to do so. If she did it for real, his neck bones would have been broken. While Kyousuke trembled, Renko whispered lightly:

"Killing itself is very simple... But that's too boring. Because I love you, so I want to experience even more... Even more ways of make you feel my love! Ehehe."

Saying that, Renko clamped Kyousuke's head.

Wrapped in her arms, she used her face and knees to apply pressure from above and below, squeezing tightly.

Kyousuke could feel her busty bosom on the back of his head. Renko's softness and sweet taste was was wrapping around Kyousuke's skull but clamping him tightly in an annoying manner. Renko's various body parts slowly applied more force, gradually pressuring his head.

"What love, you... Guaahhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

The initial pleasure was literally blown away by the pain of his head getting crushed.

Using her watermelon-like breasts, Renko was crushing his head like a watermelon, this image flashed in Kyousuke's mind.

"...Oh my, that was close. Too much love, I almost broke you."

Instantly, by the time he realized, Renko had eased the pressure she was applying.

His tense body instantly relaxed, Kyousuke instantly went limp.

Lowering herself from his shoulders to his back, Renko hugged Kyousuke's body lower around his abdomen.

"But the sounds were especially delightful to the ears... Could you let me listen more?"

Renko's seductive voice sounded in Kyousuke's ear.

Delicate and warm fingers were invading from the lower hem of his shirt, moving across every inch of his bare skin like licking it.

Outstanding technique and power was making his skin tremble from fear.

"Hey, where do you want me to start breaking you? The abdomen? The chest? Or perhaps here... Your crotch? Digestive organ, respiratory organ, circulatory organ, reproductive organ... Fufu. Wherever you wish, I can play music for you to listen, you know? To me, you are special~ I will let you die as you wish!"

"......Why?"

"Hmm?"

"Why me, Renko!?"

Kyousuke yelled, using all his strength to push Renko away.

"Uwah!?" Renko was blown away as though on purpose, falling on the floor.

Looking down at Renko who was screaming "Owwwww... Jeez, don't hurt me too much!", Kyousuke held his stinging head and roared angrily:

"Renko, you must know, right!? I am not some 'Mass Murderer of Twelve'. I am just an ordinary person with no particular traits except being stronger than the average person! There's no reason, logic, principle, nothing why someone like you should love me. But why--"

"...God knows. Why? Ufufu."

Still lying flat on her back, Renko closed her eyes as though going to sleep.

Despite her making this unguarded posture, full of openings, Kyousuke did not make a move in the end.

While catching his breath, Kyousuke looked at Renko's silent, sleeping face. So beautiful that it was impossible to associate with a mortal's beauty, a peaceful smile appeared on this face that one could not associate with a killing machine.

"I am the order made "Murder Made"... For me who was created for murder, murder is the reason I exist. From the moment I was born, killing intent was already ringing. Following the inborn killing intent, I killed, I killed, I killed, looking for slaughter, desiring slaughter... Utter and complete slaughter. Whether men or women, young or old, black or white or yellow... None of it mattered to me at all. Like scissors don't choose what kind of paper to cut. The only choice to make was the method. The way of using me, this tool, is killing intent. I will follow the orders of killing intent, ringing to kill people. Killing intent erases all my emotions, seeping inside... music driving all my actions to turn towards murder, I cannot stop... I can't stop"

Renko's eyes suddenly opened and she stood up as though bouncing up.

"...!?"

This occurred without any warning.

As Kyousuke stood in the same spot, unable to react, Renko's left arm attacked.

The strike aimed at the side of his head was barely guarded by his right arm.

His bones screamed intensely while he was violently blown away.

"Guh!?"

While Kyousuke was unsteady on his feet due to suffering the impact, Renko swung her left leg immediately. This was using her arm strength to perform a back spinning kick. Wearing indoor shoes, terrifying, proper technique was used to capture his flank.

"Gah!?'

Kyousuke screamed pitifully while he was blown spectacularly away. Failing to use break-fall techniques, he fell directly on the concrete floor.

His view moved randomly between the blue-gray floor and the burning sky.

"Tsk... Ouch... Damn it. Attacking without warning!"

Guarding his kicked flank, Kyousuke endured the intense pain, gritting his teeth to sit up.

Five meters away from him, Renko swayed her body as she slowly approached.

"Oh sorry sorry. Like the undulating beat of music, killing intent rises and falls in order~ If it enters a climax, I won't be able to control it well either~ Teehee~"

Renko stuck out her tongue, making a half-fist to knock the side of her head.

Seeing her show no guilt at all, Kyousuke could not help but ponder what he heard before...

--Kyousuke finally understood.

'Wanting to hold hands because of love.'

'Wanting to hug because of love.'

'Wanting to kiss because of love.'

These feelings of her had all turned into 'wanting to kill because of love', driving her to take action.

After removing the gas mask, Renko's entire emotions were linked to killing.

Although this causality was twisted, currently, apart from slaughter, Renko had no choice and nothing to choose from.

--Because she was made this way. This was the fundamental difference between her and Kyousuke and the others.

"Fufu. Jeez... Why did I meet you when I had my mask on? Having lost the master called 'killing intent', I can't kill people, neither do I want to kill people, like a pair of scissors that no one wants to use, nothing can be cut. But even so, I am still a 'person.' Even if I'm unable to produce killing intent, I can generate feelings. I can feel affection for you... The instant I take an interest in the target, the emotions will connect with killing intent. Emotions seldom develop to this degree. Also, the most important thing is..."

Renko's ice-blue eyes narrowed as she gazed at Kyousuke.

Pupils dilated. In the depths of the dazzling light of insanity, a faint and gentle light was flickering.

"...To me, you are indeed special. Even if you think you're very ordinary, to me you are still special. Ever since I was born in this world, I have been living in darkness. To an existence like me... Hey. At least, you are the first person in my life who was able to let me make contact with someone coming from a sunny place. Also, you are the first person beside me who has no killing experience... I am particularly interested because you and I are so distant from each other. So I thirst to know what you are like."

"..."

Kyousuke's brain replayed what he had heard in the infirmary.

Eiri had said: "You and I live in completely different worlds."

The entire student body consisted of murderers but mixed in this school that led to the underside of society was the only foreign object--Kyousuke. Eiri and Maina were only aberrant but not foreign.

Precisely because of that, Renko felt intense curiosity towards Kyousuke.

Unlike the other students drawn to the facade of the Mass Murderer of Twelve.

Only Renko was attracted to Kyousuke's true face and approached.

She slowly approached then...

"After talking to you, I was so surprised. You're too unguarded. Killing intent, hostility, malice, whatever, none of that could be felt from you at all. Completely different from all the people I've come into contact all this time... This difference made me feel very comfortable. It made emotions, which I've never felt before, flow out nonstop... The instant I was connected to emotions apart from killing, it felt so warm. So very happy."

Renko smiled, swaying over to Kyousuke's side.

As though confirming, lightly caressing Kyousuke's face, she stared into his eyes.

Her hand movements were gentle and delicate. Renko's thoughts were transmitted through her ice-blue and clear eyes.

Hence, it made Kyousuke feel more troubled. What should I do? I don't know.

What am I supposed to feel toward Renko? I don't know.

Recalling the time spent together with Renko over the past few days, Kyousuke spoke up:

"I'm very happy too, Renko... It's been very fun together with you. Speaking of unguarded, you're even more unguarded... Because to me, this is an environment filled with psychos so meeting the pure and innocent you brought me salvation. However--"

"Yes. But that's not my true face. I know that too, I know. After feeling attracted to you, I started thinking about many many things. 'Want to touch you.' 'Want you to touch me.' 'Want to know you.' 'Want you to know me.' Not the me with the mask but the true me... Something like that. Fufu. But this is too tragic, too sad, Kyousuke... After throwing the mask away, the instant I exposed my original self--How is it?"

The eyes began to shift up. Renko's fingers rushed madly and closed tightly around Kyousuke's throat.

Strangling him with both hands, she lifted Kyousuke.

"Ah... Guh.. Ren... ko...!?"

Choked in the throat, unable to breathe. The thumb was pressing on the windpipe, the index finger on the carotid, the middle finger on the jugular,

the ring and little fingers securing--A most correct and flawless stranglehold.

Her ice-blue eyes were giving off radiant light, mustering the powerful killing intent that was devouring her whole body.

"Want to touch you. Want you to touch me. Want to know you. Want you to know me. These emotions have disappeared without trace! I just want to kill you. Kyousuke, I want to kill you. I love you the most, so I want to kill you the most... Fufufu. This is the outro that I've truly sought. Because the true me is the me right here right now. Sorry, Kyousuke. I'm really sorry. Although you wanted to do this and that with me... But right now, all I want to do is kill. I've answered you honestly so it's about time for you to die, right? Fu, ufufu..."

Renko's body shook, her fingertips applying even more strength.

--At this rate, I'll really die.

Despite desperately struggling to pull her hand away, Kyousuke could not make Renko's arm budge at all. The oxygen in his lungs was being squeezed dry without reserve, the blocked blood flow was making his strangled mind all red.

"Gah... Ack... No good..."

His view started turning white.

Renko's face, showing an ecstatic smile seemed to be moving far away into the other side of the clouds.

About to die, what replaced his view was his most important sister--Ayaka's face.

Whether she was laughing or crying, he could not capture her expression, unable to discern.

Even so, I have a message I must convey.

Before this consciousness was cut off.

Before this life was cut off.

In the past, I swore to protect her.

I sword never to make her sad again.

I swore to let her smile.

For her, who's the most important in the world...

Even if I cannot deliver this to her, I must convey these thoughts--

"Sorry... Sorry..... Ayaka."

He whispered.

Then in the next instant...

".....Eh?"

A sluggish voice leaked out.

Suddenly, the sensations of the world recovered.

"......!?"

The mist shrouding his view dissipated all at once.

Liberated from Renko's hands, his body slid down and fell on the concrete floor.

Free to breathe once more, he looked up in puzzlement.

"Cough... Cough... Cough... You..."

At this moment, Renko's lost voice was heard.

"......Huh? Eh? Huh...?"

While catching his breath, he looked up to see the ice-blue eyes opened wide, Renko rooted to the spot, frozen.

She was clutching her head as though in fear, cowering, backing away.

From her slightly twitching lips, unbelievable words were said.

"The music... The killing intent has stopped."

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".....Huh?"

The abrupt development took time for the brain to catch up.

Driving Renko to kill, absolute killing intent--the music that was supposed to be sounding all along in her mind, unbelievably... stopped suddenly?

"Why!? What happened!? Weird! Halfway through, the killing intent stopped suddenly, this happening... Impossible! What did you do... What on earth did you do, Kyousuke!?"

Even herself was unable to understand the situation, Renko was in a panic, howling and screaming.

Throwing herself against the bosom of the shocked Kyousuke, she grabbed his chest.

Her slightly quivering ice-blue eyes were like clear surfaces of water.

The radiant light of killing intent had disappeared completely.

Of course, Kyousuke had not done anything. He could not see any special changes in the environment either.

--Then why? Renko buried her face in the silent Kyousuke's chest and yelled:

"Before you were about to die, you said a certain person's name, instantly... It was the instant when you called out the name of that unknown person! You made my killing intent stop! My heart hurts like it's pricked by needles, my brain went blank, at a loss, then... Ahhhhhhhhhh, enough!"

Looking up forcefully, Renko glared at Kyousuke up close.

Her eyes were angry, her lips were trembling. Her flushed red face seemed to be twitching.

"Hey, Kyousuke... Who is that!? I heard 'Ayaka'! A girl, right? Is that girl really that important? Why!? Why didn't you call my name even when you were about to die!? Why wasn't I on your mind!? I clearly care so much about you, why... Why did the killing intent stop...!?"

Renko bowed her head, her shoulders trembling. Sobs came from her mouth.

Renko, whose every emotion was supposed to be linked to killing behavior, cried.

Seeing this scene, hearing these words, Kyousuke was very confused.

"Renko, you... could it be that... you're jealous of Ayaka?"

"...Jealous?" Faced with Kyousuke's question, posed with a troubled voice, Renko looked up again.

Tears fell in a torrent, washing her tattoo-covered arms. The ice-blue eyes narrowed.

"Oh right... I am feeling jealous. Madly jealous about that 'Ayaka' girl! How could I not feel jealous!? You, whom I love the most in the whole wide world, to think that another girl exists in your eyes, not me--If possible I really want to kill her right now with a thousand cuts... Shredding her corpse completely! Ah... It's starting... Crazy, intense killing intent! Music! So noisy--kill kill kill

murder, the melodies are stirred to a mess, then--killing intent suddenly stopped."

Saying that, Renko held her hand against her chest. Frowning, she bit her lip hard, her wavering ice-blue eyes--all expressed her suffering and sadness.

"....."

Seeing Renko like this, Kyousuke gradually gathered and calmed his chaotic thoughts.

Apparently, Renko was feeling unbearable anger, sadness and pain about Kyousuke's feelings moving on to another girl--even though Ayaka was actually his younger sister rather than a romantic partner.

--Why aren't you thinking of me?

Clearly when I'm thinking so much of you, why...

--Shouldn't he think of her in return?

"...!? No way--"

Kyousuke breathed a sigh of relief as he suddenly realized.

This anger and sadness invading the heart was actually an emotion similar to but different from jealousy.

Kyousuke had experienced this bittersweet feeling before--

"Renko."

He called out her name. Renko went "...Hmm?" and looked up.

Placing his hands on her shoulders, staring into her wavering eyes, Kyousuke said:

"Ayaka is the most important girl to me. Waiting for me in the outside world, the most important girl. So I'm sorry, Renko. I can't respond to your feelings. You are not my number one. I'm very happy about your feelings but... Sorry."

"-----"

Hearing Kyousuke, Renko's face went into a dazed silence. Then repeating "most important girl... sorry?" again and again, suddenly, her expression became twisted all at once.

"Sob... Ah... Wahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

--She started bawling and crying. Leaning against Kyousuke's chest, she cried her heart out.

Hot tears flowing out swiftly made Kyousuke's shirt wet.

"Ooooooooh... Rejected... I was rejected by Kyousuke... Sniff... Sob."

Kyousuke stroked the crying Renko's head and continued:

"What you feel towards me are good intentions, right? Falling in love for the first time in your life? But Renko... Love is never without trials and tribulations--Precisely because of that, there's bitterness. What do you think? The feelings from liking someone... cannot be satisfied by your own efforts alone. It's not the same as simple anger or sadness. One-sidedly declaring your feelings, one-sidedly kill the other person, this does bring satisfaction. Only when the other person feels the same way... Only when two hearts love each other is fulfillment achieved."

What stopped Renko's killing intent was not jealousy but the bitterness of one-sided love.

The instant Kyousuke called out Ayaka's name--understanding that the person she loved did not return her feelings, the flood of intense noise had devoured Renko.

Jealousy, displeasure, fury, grief, sadness... and love. These emotions competed with one another as they fought to flow out, interfering, mixing with one another--hence Renko's killing intent stopped. Because her heart was trying to protect itself from the disharmony by censoring the unbearable noise...

"...Hmm?"

Renko slowly moved her face away from Kyousuke's shirt.

Her lips turning into an arc, her blue-white fangs glinted with dark light.

"Eh, I see. One-sided love... Hmm. It's true that it doesn't feel too good. Super uncomfortable. But Kyousuke... There's such a saying, right? The betrayal of love brings hate. Since you are unable to respond to my love, then I'll hand my body over to the displeasure I am currently feeling--hand it over to hate!"

Renko's ice-blue eyes opened wide and she swung her arm.

However, she instantly put her arm down again and hugged Kyousuke tightly.

"How could I possibly do that!? My love for you is much, much~ stronger than hate. Ahwuwu... I really wanna kill you... I really want to kill you! But you don't love me... Sob sob. What to do... What should I do!? Awuwu~"

Breaking out in cold sweat from the fright Renko caused him, Kyousuke wiped the sweat from his brow and smiled wryly.

"Jeez. You... See, you're quite capable of saying things to make others happy... Thank you, Renko."

--Thinking over again, Kyousuke decided that Renko really was a good girl.

Although the excessively intense killing intent was very tricky, that was her true nature--but not her personality. Having lost all killing intent, Renko's true self was just the same as herself when wearing the gas mask, a pure and gentle girl.

Otherwise, Kyousuke should have died immediately.

Precisely because Renko was able to face her emotions seriously and sincerely, her killing intent remained stopped.

Hence, Kyousuke survived...

"'Murder Made'... What on earth are you doing?"

--Just at this moment...

Under the intensely burning sunset, a sharp lolita voice.

Renko's rubbing of her face against Kyousuke's chest suddenly stopped.

From the direction of the door slightly away, a petite figure slowly walked over.

Clong, clong, both hands were carrying weapons--

"...Kurumiya... -sensei."

"Hmph. I never thought you'd still be alive, Kamiya. To think you survived with your four limbs intact despite being toyed with by the Murder Made whose limiter was released... And then? What on earth are you doing, Renko? Failing to kill him, what are you doing here, waving your tits around? HUH!?"

Kurumiya swung the steel pipe in her right hand, shouting angrily at Renko.

Renko looked up from Kyousuke's chest and looked at the approaching Kurumiya.

Like a child who had been scolded by an adult, she pouted.

"But I can't help it~ Kyousuke doesn't love me at all! If Kyousuke had said 'I love you' to me, I would have killed him, overjoyed~"

Hearing Renko, Kurumiya's marble-like eyes stared.

Then going "...Hoh?" she narrowed her eyes, pointing a steel pipe at Kyousuke.

"Very well, now decisively tell Renko 'I love you' or else I'll--"

"STOOOOOOOP! Kyousuke is mine to kill! I absolutely absolutely won't let him be killed! If you force him to say 'I love you' to me like this, I won't feel satisfied... The killing intent won't sound!"

Frantically, Renko spread her arms to protect Kyousuke.

"......Huh?"

Kurumiya's eyebrows were squeezed together in a frown.

Her surprised eyes moved alternately between Renko and Kyousuke then she put the steel pipe down.

"Your killing intent cannot sound? What do you mean? You mean you're fucking broken... Murder Made?"

"Fufu, perhaps. However, Kurumiya-san..."

Renko's body began to sway slowly.

While nodding her head to this rhythm, she lowered her center of gravity.

"To everyone else apart from Kyousuke, I can still feel killing intent as usual... RIIIIIIIIGHT!?"

--A howl. Renko moved with explosiveness.

Kicking the ground, she leaped towards Kurumiya with frightening speed.

Closing in the two meters of separation took less than a tenth of a second. With speed impossible to capture with the naked eye, she atacked with her left hand with lightning speed, easily crushing Kurumiya's head--Just an instant before that...

"Eha!?"

The steel pipe moved with lightning speed, sending Renko flying with a crash.

Intercepted. Her head smashing hard against the fencing, Renko stopped moving just like that.

This time she really looked like she had fainted. During the process, she only managed to lift her neck slightly, turning her eyes. Blood was flowing out spectacularly from the side of her head where she was struck.

"...Hmph. I see. Looks like there's no malfunctioning and the body's movements are as quick as ever. Rather, I should say the condition is excellent. Forcing me to show my true skills for an instant? ...You really are a fucking monster, Murder Made. Even if just for a millisecond, you still made me lose composure... Kukuku."

...No matter how you think about it, Kurumiya was definitely closer to being a monster.

Whether using demonic reaction speed to counter Renko's surprise attack, the forceful blow that put Renko out of commission in one hit, or this attitude as though she didn't even break a sweat...

"What kind of demon are you... Are all the teachers here monsters like you?"

While Kyousuke stood there trembling, Kurumiya rested her deadly weapon on her shoulder.

Crossing the two steel pipes behind her head, Kurumiya grinned.

"I am a professional killer, Kamiya. The same goes for all the other teachers. Not a third-rate like the Rusty Nail but top-class killers. Isn't it perfectly logical for the teachers to be killers in a school that trains killers? And among them, I am called Bellows Maria... Quite famous too. No matter how much potential these students may have, they are nothing more than barely weaned brats, I can easily wipe them out in two seconds."

"...Seriously."

Although Kyousuke had refrained from letting his imagination run wild, thinking it would be bad, still, he was too naive.

Kurumiya goes without saying, but don't ever oppose any of the teachers in this school, Kyousuke vowed in his heart.

To think others like this crazy bitch were walking all around, simply that thought alone was terrifying enough...

"Putting this aside, Kamiya... What magic did you use? Not only did you cause the Murder Made who was created for killing to be unable to kill the target, but you also tamed it to prevent the target from getting killed... This error is a first. How surprising."

Kurumiya wiped away her smile and looked down at Kyousuke.

A dark vortex of unknown origins was swirling in her adorable eyes.

Surprise and anger--followed by a negative emotion like jealousy.

"That girl also showed you her true face. Although kind as I am, I only allowed her to release the limiter because I wanted you to see... The result was totally beyond my expectations. Simply making Murder Made stop, I can do that. But making her killing intent stop is impossible. And by accomplishing such a thing, you've ignored iron-clad principles dating from antiquity... Why? What magic did you actually cast?"

As expected, Kurumiya was the one who abetted Renko.

Framing Kyousuke with false charges, putting deadly weapons in circulation among the students, releasing Renko's limiter... How contemptible. Why did he have to put up with being manipulated by her to this degree?

Kyousuke forcibly suppressed his urge to question her. First, he answered her question:

"No, I'm not too sure either, but... Perhaps it's the magic of love?"

"Who put these sickeningly sweet words in your rotten mouth? Are you looking down on me, brat? You don't think I'll flatten you?"

"Eh."

(...Or maybe this bitch simply has fun in bullying me?)

During this exchange, in front of the happy teacher whose eyes were glimmering as though about to say "I was waiting all along for this sentence", Kyousuke thought.

For Kurumiya, the super sadist among super sadists, Kyousuke who was nothing more than an ordinary person was perhaps just a toy with a gilded exterior. Due to his body's excessive sturdiness, she wanted to see how far she could go until the toy was broken.

(Oh, could it be that? I am this bitch's... squeeze toy?)

If that was true, there must be no god. In this school, there probably did not exist a Parent Teacher Association.

"Hmph, whatever. Looks like it'll be more efficient to ask her directly. I will question her while I mete out discipline. Rather than asking her mind, I will ask her body. Personally, I love torture and interrogation... Kukuku."

Saying that, Kurumiya shifted her gaze to the unconscious Renko.

Putting down the two deadly weapons from her shoulders, she licked her lips then prepared to walk.

Kyousuke frantically got up and blocked Kurumiya's way.

"......Hey, you're blocking the way. Move aside. Watch out or you'll be disciplined together as well, you know?"

Having once again confirmed how terrifying Kurumiya was, why was he taking this sort of action? Even Kyousuke had no idea why.

(...Oh, it's like this. I don't want to see her smashed to bits.)

Silently looking at the girl who had revealed the truth to him--Kyousuke was the type who could not bear such things happening.

Without budging an inch, he stared intently at Kurumiya's pair of eyes where killing intent was rapidly reaching boiling point. Kyousuke said:

"...Move aside? Don't wanna. If you want to ask, can't you just ask normally? It shouldn't be necessary to deliberately discipline, deliberately torture and deliberately vent violent urges."

"I believe it is necessary. And the reasons are more than sufficient... Listen carefully, Kamiya. Murder Made is a being created for the sake of killing, a tool. No matter what the reason, a tool that does not listen to orders is completely worthless. It is necessary to root out the source and discipline thoroughly. Applied to it, adjustments or repairs would be more apt as a description... Putting all that aside, you can rest assured. I won't break it. Murder Made--Renko is far more resilient than you. Even suffering torture that would kill an ordinary person, it has enough capacity to survive."

After finishing, Kurumiya thrust a steel pipe towards Kyousuke's throat.

This was a long and slender pipe, the color of steel, one that could be found anywhere. Perhaps having been used to bludgeon Renko, its front tip was bent. Kurumiya readied the twisted deadly weapon and jeered:

"...But what about you, Kamiya? Perfect timing. If after all I've said you still won't move aside, then I'll perform a durability test on you. Pursuing you, pursuing you, until the very moment you reach near death or go mad."

"....."

Even after receiving Kurumiya's final warning, Kyousuke still did not back down.

Whether in a brawl or anything else, bones can be broken but the spirit must not yield.

Once a decision was made, it must be upheld until the bitter end. --Follow through to the very end. This was Kyousuke's principle.

With slightly more diplomacy, perhaps he would not have ended up in this kind of situation in the first place--But even so, for Kyousuke and his forthright personality, this was the unchanging way of life he could only choose.

Kyousuke decided to protect Renko, deciding to protect the girl who had said "I love you" to him.

Although he could not return her feelings, but at this very moment, he was at least able to endure physical pain on her behalf and share some of her inner suffering.

This was the greatest extent he could respond to Renko's feelings and express emotions of "thank you."

"...Hoh? What a great pervert you are with lust on the brain, Kamiya. Very well... In that case, I shall let you savor this properly. The reason why I am called Bellows Maria and feared by those in my line of work... Kukuku."

Carrying two steel pipes on her shoulders, Kurumiya took a step towards Kyousuke.

Enduring the pressure from a top-class killer's overwhelming killing intent, Kyousuke's forehead broke out in greasy sweat.

In order to control his body's trembling, he clenched his fist forcefully--Just at this moment.

"Yahahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

A great roar resembling thunder arrived.

Obliterating the tense atmosphere completely, the shrill voice stopped Kurumiya's movements.

Her joyful smile became tense before Kyousuke's eyes as a layer of angry emotion was added.

"Y-You asshole... How many times will you get in my way before you're satisfied... Mohican!?"

Kurumiya's shoulders shook intensely as she glared sideways.

Standing at the door, all wrapped in bandages, the boy was glaring back in a taunting manner.

"Yahaha! Aren't you asking a question you already know the answer to, lil' gal Kurumiya-chwa~n? Of course I've been biding my time to make you submit to me, bitch! In other words, until today! Right this moment! Yahahahaha!"

Laughing nonstop, Mohican was dragging with his hand a ludicrously large metal ball (chain included), one meter in diameter, who knows where he got it from. The ball was solemnly labelled "1t".

"Get rid of that damn '-chan' honorific. Totally giving me goosebumps. Also, that metal ball... Isn't that my personal possession!? You asshole dared to sneak into my office? I won't forgive you... Absolutely, I won't forgive you!"

"Ch, ch, ch, ch. That's just the tip of the iceberg. For example, what about this!? Chang~"

"...!?" The steel pipe slid down from Kurumiya's shoulder.

"...!?" Kyousuke was rendered dumbfounded too.

No matter how shocking those bear print panties were, the most shocking was still Mohican's foolhardy behavior in deliberately presenting them to the public.

"Mohican, fucker..."

--What a resolute moron.

While Kyousuke was suppressing the impulse to say this remark out loud, Mohican sneered coldly.

"Hoho. I'm sorry but Kurumiya-chwa~n is my woman... Dare make a move on her and Imma gonna erase you! Looks like I'm really someone that others get jealous of! Yahaha!"

"Hmm? ...R-Really... Well, umm, how should I put this... Good luck. Ha... Hahaha..."

Kyousuke replied with stiff laughter while quitely getting away from Kurumiya's side.

Silently looking down, shoulders trembling, Kurumiya was giving off a dangerous aura that resembled steaming miasma. This flickering illusion born from anger looked almost like black flames.

"When did I... become... your woman... fucker... HUH!?"

From her gritted teeth, a deep sound escaped.

Maybe he noticed her reaction or perhaps not, Mohican was wearing the bear print panties on his head, gripping the chain tightly in his hand. The steel ball labeled "1t" was lifted up from the ground.

"...So. Today I will play with you until you're broken, Kurumiya-chwa~n! I'll show you my true power! Fallen for me yet!? Yahahahahaha!"

Yelling, Mohican charged.

Twirling the steel ball fiercely above his head, he attacked in a straight line.

"....."

In contrast, Kurumiya remained silent.

Her arms dangling powerlessly, her eyes were calmly closed.

Mohican swung the steel ball towards the side of her face, accompanied with a foolish "Hyaahaaaaa" --In that instant.

"DIIIIIIIIIIIIIEEEEEEEEEE!"

Eyes opening, Kurumiya struck the steel ball with the pipe in her right hand.

With an acute metallic sound, the steel ball (1t) was shattered.

"...Huha?"

On Mohican's surprised face, the steel pipe in her left hand buried itself.

"Yahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh--Hidebu!?"

Blown flying away, striking his head on the metal fencing, Mohican stopped moving.

Next to the unconscious Renko, his eyes were rolled up, entire body twitching.

Beaten in, his deformed face was naturally mosaic'd.

"Hmph, finally settling down, how annoying... But do you think this is enough for me to forgive you? Forget about the steel ball but to think you even flaunted my victory underwear... Looks like I'll have to give you some good loving all night long."

Kurumiya kicked away the steel ball's fragments while walking over to Mohican.

At some point in time, the steel pipes had vanished from her hands.

Kyousuke could not see where she took them out from or where she put them away.

Including the fact that she regarded bear print panties as victory underwear, Kyousuke once again experienced how absolutely terrifying this teacher was.

"...Hey Kamiya. Consider this penal labor. Clean up the trash over here. I'm returning to the dorm. After putting Renko's limiter back on, I still need to take care of this stupid swine."

Lifting Renko in her right hand and Mohican in her left, Kurumiya picked up the gas mask on the floor along the way and tossed it at Kyousuke.

"Hikawa Renko who can't do anything apart from killing, Akabane Eiri who can't kill anyone and Igarashi Maina who can't kill anymore... Every one of these girls who are close to you are defective goods and absolutely troublesome--However, they are also prodigies whose promising talents are under close scrutiny. Let me use you to correct these girls' twistedness. Kukuku... Of course, I will also discipline you utterly--the ordinary Kamiya Kyousuke--to become an outstanding killer."

Faced with Kurumiya smiling with narrowed eyes, Kyousuke yelled indomitably:

"Screw that! I won't become a killer! I won't kill and won't be killed... No matter what happens, absolutely not! I will resist to the very end... Don't think I'll be disciplined by you to become a killer so easily!"

Accepting Kyousuke's stalwart gaze, Kurumiya's joy deepened.

"...Hoh? That's quite spirited of you. Go ahead and resist as hard as you can, if you are confident in your endurance. However, kukuku... Very well. If you can withstand the entire curriculum of this Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation, all three years of it, brat... Not killing anyone, not getting killed by anyone, to reach the graduation ceremony--Then I will let you graduate to the surface society. Your false charges will also be wiped clean completely."

"...!? Really!?"

"Yes, no mistake. I've said it already, right? I only speak the truth. No matter how hard a metal may be, it has no utility unless it can be processed. I will convince the board chairman. Do your best towards this wish and goal... However, do know that three years is very long, yes? During this time, let's watch and see. Kukuku..."

"...Couldn't be more welcomed. Even if it means dying, I will endure... I must endure and survive!"

As the figure disappeared on the other side of the door, Kyousuke declared.

Gritting his teeth, Kyousuke was clenching his fist so hard that his bones were grating.

Kyousuke's current predicament was impossible to laugh at, full of despair.

But even so, as long as there was a faint glimmer of hope, he was able to obtain the courage to make a vow.

--I absolutely won't give up.

"This time I guess I'll be home late, however... Wait for me, Ayaka."

Looking up at the red of dusk that was starting to mix with the blue of the evening darkness, Kyousuke thought.

Far far away, at the place he missed, Ayaka must surely be looking up at the same sky...

# After School - Outroduction

"Eeeeeeeeeeeeh!? Kyousuke-kun actually hasn't killed anyone? Is that for real!?"

The next day after school, in the infirmary where there was no one else, Maina suddenly screamed.

"Hey... That's too loud! Control your volume, volume!"

"What if someone hears you!? And you even repeated it on purpose--Ouch!"

After Kyousuke, Eiri also yelled. Holding the side of her ribs, she groaned painfully.

Sitting up on the sickbed, Eiri was dressed in a striped tracksuit.

Normally tied in a ponytail, her rust-red hair was hanging down, resulting in long wavy hair. Normally calm and composed, her face was frowning in pain.

"Eiri-chan!? Are you okay!?"

"Eee!? Oh, nothing, I'm fine. Really fine... J-Just calm down, okay?"

As soon as Maina leaned forward, Eiri tensed from fright.

She was currently all covered in wounds.

Gauze and band-aids were stuck on her face while other parts were wrapped in bandages. It looked quite painful.

The culprit who caused her these severe injuries was bowing in apology.

"Auu... Sorry! I was really trying very hard to get help as soon as possible... Auau. In the end, umm... There were many mistakes... This, that..."

"...Nothing much. You don't need to be so concerned. Apart from getting a few ribs broken by Renko, it's nothing major, right? Although Maina dropped me many times, possibly making my injuries worse. Or rather, it's already worsened... A-Anyway! It doesn't bother me, don't worry. However, umm... Before I recover, please don't come too close to me, okay?"

".....Sorry. I understand."

Hearing Eiri's subtly worded description, Maina slumped her shoulders in dejection.

This was hardly surprising. As the ultimate clumsy girl, Maina had repeated accidents on the way when taking Eiri to the infirmary. Thanks to that, Eiri suffered countless hardships, multiplying her wounds.

Kyousuke was also filled with apology for entrusting Eiri to Maina.

"...Sigh." Seeing Maina and Kyousuke hanging their heads in reflection, Eiri sighed.

"...Besides, my case really doesn't matter at all. Now let's talk about Kyousuke's matter."

"No, it's not like it doesn't matter... Well, you're right. Let's get back to the subject."

Faced with Eiri's prickly but kind attitude, Kyousuke smiled and cleared his throat.

Calming himself, he said:

"...In other words, the Mass Murderer of Twelve is a false charge. The real me is just an ordinary person. Just someone who's slightly stronger at fighting--"

"Okay okay, hold it right there. That 'slightly' is totally not slightly."

"So true so true! Kyousuke-kun is not just an ordinary person... A very strong ordinary person! Someone who transcends common people, as the song goes, people equal shit!"

Confronted with two girls who refuted him without hesitation, Kyousuke shook his head helplessly and clenched his fist.

Entrenched firmly in the depths of his mind was the graduation condition that Kurumiya had offered.

"I'm not strong at all... Although maybe stronger than ordinary people, but being strong as just one person is not enough for me to survive these three years. Also, I have already experienced trials of life and death many times here. However..."

Kyousuke stopped speaking here and gazed at Eiri and Maina's faces.

They were the rare comrades he had met in this Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation, those whom he could trust.

"If you two can help me, I think I will manage to survive. Of course, I will lend my strength to you two as well, I'll protect you even if the sky falls down. So please... Please lend me your assistance!"

Saying that, Kyousuke bowed his head at the two girls.

Having received quite a lot of help from them these days, he was now relying on their help again.

"...Huh?" Lips pursed, while Kyousuke was bowing his head, looking at the floor, Eiri replied in surprise.

"How stupid, Kyousuke... Is it time to be talking about this? Doesn't that go without saying?"

"That's right that's right! Kyousuke-kun's feet stinks too much! We're the ones who've been receiving Kyousuke-kun's one-sided care... Rather, I want to become Kyousuke-kun's power! Although I'm very useless."

Follow up on what Eiri said, Maina also readily showed consideration for Kyousuke.

Even though rather feet stinking (足臭い), it should be being standoffish (水臭い), but that didn't matter now.

Touched by the two girls' warm affection, Kyousuke wiped the corners of his eyes with his finger and looked up.

"Ooh... Thank you. You're both really good people--This, hey?"

Instantly, entering Kyousuke's view was a black gas mask that was peeking straight at him from the subtly ajar door.

Following Kyousuke's gaze, Eiri and Maina also looked there. The gas mask instantly hid itself.

" "......?" " The two girls showed puzzlement.

Kyousuke smiled wryly and yelled.

"Hey Renko, what are you doing there acting so sneaky? Come in."

But Renko did not emerge.

She must be embarrassed due to what happened not too long ago.

"Sob. B-But... I'll definitely get scolded. After I get scolded, I'll get violated..."

"Hold it right there! Who do you take me for? I'm not going to violate you so come out now!"

"But you're angry? Then you'll hate me? You've seen my true face already... How could you not hate me... Sob."

Her voice sounded like she was currently moving in circles on the floor.

While Kyousuke was in a dilemma, Eiri's tongue clicking was heard.

Putting her hands on the special chest bandange that held her ribs in place and made her chest even flatter, Eiri glared towards the door.

In that incident, Renko had caused the most injuries to Eiri.

Blunt trauma, internal bleeding and other external wounds. Broken ribs had pierced into the lungs. Recovering would take a month or so.

As a side note, Kyousuke, who was supposed to be beaten into a rag, only suffered minor bruises and was viciously reprimanded by Eiri's "...Are you really human?" and other scoldings--That's an aside.

It was not hard to imagine what Eiri might feel towards Renko after all this.

She was exuding an unbelievable aura of annoyance.

"Sneaking around... is so annoying. If you think you're wrong then come over and apologize directly. This attitude of yours is pissing me off."

Eiri's harsh tongue made the gas mask emerge halfway from the gap in the door.

"...I don't think I'm wrong so apologizing never occurred to me. Because, that's the real me. If I say 'sorry' to you right now, then that would be denying my own existence... However, you won't accept this, right? You'll hate me? I don't want to be hated by you guys... Although I know I'll be hated, I don't want to face this harsh reality. So..."

"That's why you're sneaking around, hiding yourself? I already said just now. This attitude of yours is pissing me off. If you don't feel like

apologizing, then don't apologize. Just say it openly. You know you'll be hated? ...That's not something that you decide."

Confronted with Eiri muttering emphatically with face turned to the side, Renko began to hesitate.

Then Maina who had been keeping her head down, looked up with determination.

"But... I heard Kyousuke-kun say already! After taking off the mask, Renko-chan will become, umm... unable to live without killing people. It feels very similar to my clumsiness. I don't know if it's right to call it unavoidable or left without a choice... Renko-chan, you understand my clumsiness and accepted me, right? So, I won't hate you because of something like that, Renko-chan!"

"...Maina." Maina's honest declaration caused Renko to show more of her face.

Seeing Renko still unwilling to come out even by this point, Kyousuke scratched the back of his head.

"Besides, it's fine now that you're wearing your mask, right? Although it's very hard to approach you when unmasked... That's just due to danger and has nothing to do with hating. Have you seen lions? Although I don't hate them, I'll be attacked if I get near... It's very similar, right? I'm not that angry about what happened earlier, so hurry and come in. --Come on."

Seeing Kyousuke beckoning to her, Renko awkwardly poked her upper half through the door.

"Oooooh... B-But..."

"No 'buts.' Understanding the way Maina is allows us to handle things somewhat--Didn't you say something like that yourself the first time after experiencing Maina's clumsiness? We also understand that's the way you are, so it's the same principle. Me, Eiri, Maina, all of us... We don't hate hate you. We've been waiting all of yesterday for you to come, Renko, did you know?"

Instantly, Renko stopped moving.

Silently, she looked at Kyousuke, Eiri and Maina in turn.

Eiri shrugged, Maina smiled radiantly while Kyousuke made a wry smile.

--Then.

"Uwahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! Everyooooooooooooooooone!"

Renko pushed the door open violently and entered the room.

"Thank you... Thank you everyone! Ooh... Sniff... Shuko."

In sequence, she hugged Eiri, Maina and Kyousuke tightly.

"Ouch! Idiot... It hurts!" Tears appeared in Eiri's eyes as she yelled and pushed Renko away, saying "...J-Just die already" and covering her chest.

"Uwah... Renko-chan, d-don't cry... Sob... Sniff." Saying that, Maina began crying a storm herself, hugging Renko tightly in return.

"...Say, I almost got killed by this girl the other day." Finally it was Kyousuke who spoke while stroking Renko's back as she hugged him.

Strangely enough, he did not feel angry. Perhaps there might be a little lingering but much more than that, his reaction was surprise... Exasperation with her.

The joy evoked by her pure and innocent personality instantly dissipated his anger.

Also, for a great girl like her (super beautiful after taking off that gas mask) to be harboring such affection for him, perhaps it was one of the reasons why it was impossible to hate her.

"...Kyousuke. Wait for me. I will immediately make you fall in love with me, okay?"

--Suddenly, Renko said sweetly in his ear.

The sudden direct declaration caused Kyousuke's heart to jump violently.

But what she said next made his heart almost stop.

"Once you fall in love with me, I will kill you, okay? Foosh. Of course, I have no impulse to kill at the moment, but... Even so, I am still Murder Made. I will turn you into a mess then kill you. Don't worry, Kyousuke. I won't let anyone else kill you. I will definitely protect you and stop others from killing you... The one who kills you will be me. --Your heart is mine."

"....."

Kyousuke's blushing face instantly turned livid while the trembling in his heart turned into a different type of palpitation.

--In other words, umm... This is the situation?

Renko said she was protecting him, so that she could kill him herself.

The instant Kyousuke fell for Renko, Renko would kill Kyousuke. In other words...

"I will use any means necessary to make you fall in love with me, okay, Kyousuke? Foosh."

Laughing seductively, Renko pressed her bosom tightly against him.

Kyousuke felt an extremely dangerous yet harmless premonition, what she meant by any means necessary, no way...

"Even if it means doing this or that or even that~ kind of thing... I will obtain Kyousuke. So, may I take off the mask? After all, I can't kill you. Allow me, the me with my clothes taken off, the me with my true face and naked skin exposed, play with me however you want!"

"What did... you say?"

"Foosh..." Hearing the devil's whispers, Kyousuke gulped.

If she really did that to him, he very well might fall for her, bewitched for real.

Even knowing she was born to kill, if devoid of killing intent, her personality was great and her true face was that of a super super beautiful girl.

For Kyousuke who was at the height of puberty, falling for her was inevitable no matter how his rational mind was against it...

"...Okay okay. Stop. Your nose is touching his face now. Let go of Kyousuke."

Eiri forcefully interfered, separating Kyousuke and Renko.

"Ooooh..." Renko made sounds of displeasure and talked back to Eiri.

"What, Eiri? Kyousuke has caught your eye too? Then we're rivals!"

"...Huh? Of course not. I'm not interested in Kyousuke, completely uninterested, super uninterested."

"Eh? I see! Then could you please not butt in? Oh well, even if we were to compete, the result is obvious. The difference in figure is too much, foosh."

"Huh!? What's that, are you picking a fight!? Besides, it's not like I'm feeling annoyed because you're acting all intimate in front of me, it's just an eyesore, so--Ouch!"

"Awawawawa... B-Both of you! Please calm down! C-Calm... Please calm down... Auau. Kyousuke-kyun ish a good ketch afta all..."

While intense sparks flew between Renko and Eiri, Maina continued biting her tongue.

Originally watchng this scene in fear, Kyousuke slowly began to laugh heartily.

Kurumiya had said that three years was very long.

In this Purgatorium School of Rehabilitation--an unusual school where convicted murderers were gathered...

If Kyousuke was all by his lonesome self, let alone three years, he probably would not have confidence that he could survive even a year.

Surrounded by abnormal psychos, it was surely impossible to keep his sense of self in this kind of environment.

But now...

(If I can stay together with these girls, perhaps three years might actually pass by within a blink of the eye.)

--Like this.

Kyousuke believed with certainty.

# Supplementary Lesson - Secret Track

2am in the morning, inside a dark room with no lights on...

A girl was looking up at the night sky, sitting on the edge of a bed that had lost its owner.

Through the open curtains and the transparent window glass, blue-white moonlight streamed in.

"...Onii-chan."

From her parched lips, a weak voice slipped out.

Completely pale and lacking the color blood, her face was marred by trails of tears. She looked quite thin and haggard.

The girl's eyes reflected the sky's color, black as carbon, unemotional, inorganic.

As though all emotions were lost along with the fallen tears.

"...I miss you so much."

She murmured in an exhausted voice. Then light appeared again in the girl's eyes as tears came out.

Suddenly losing her most beloved family, such deep sorrow, inconsolable. Endless tears never drying up.

"Sob sob sob sob sob sob sob sob sob sob..."

Sobbing, the girl buried her face in the towel blanket. She sniffed deeply.

Lingering there was still her older brother's faint smell. Pressing the soft fabric against her nose, the girl sniffed greedily. Sniff, sniff sniff, sniff sniff sniff

The brother's smell, the brother's warmth, the brother's words, the brother's smile, the brother's kindness, the brother's everything, all of it, she wanted.

Hence, this was totally not enough, totally impossible to satisfy her. The dear brother absent from her side, this could not be tolerated for even a second. Once the smell on this towel blanket disappeared, once all lingering traces of the brother vanished from this room, from this house, she would definitely be unable to endure any further.

Like a fish that could not survive without water, like humans who could not survive without oxygen, like drug addicts who could not survive without drugs. The girl's life was already tightly linked to her brother.

--Hence.

"......I can't just wait around."

The girl separated her face from the towel blanket that served as her mental support then looked up at the sky again.

As though being sliced, the moonlight was staring down coldly at the girl--Ayaka.

The blue-white light reflected off Ayaka's face when suddenly a burning hot smile appeared.

Looking up at the night sky, she spoke in an ecstatic, gentle voice:

"Hey, Onii-chan... Onii-chan is somewhere, also looking up at the same sky, right? Ayaka doesn't know where... But you must wait for Ayaka? Ayaka will be there presently, catching up to Onii-chan presently--By any means necessary, Ayaka must."

Ayaka's radiant eyes showed light as never before.

In those dark-colored eyes, vigorous spirit and powerful willpower resided.

Her brother, Kyousuke, was unaware of the terrifying decision born in Ayaka's heart.

--At this moment, not yet...

# Afterword - Master of Ceremonies

Thank you for picking up this book from among countless others.

Nice to meet you, I am Mizushiro Mizuki. This story, having won the Excellence Prize in the 14th Enterbrain Entertainment Awards, is my debut work serving as my name card.

Despite bearing the exotic theme of "every classmate is a murderer", the story is love comedy. Due to controlling the level of gore, the girls' fragrance is able to spread out. At least... For now, I guess. Fufu.

Since the stage setting is extremely chaotic, I am able to show things that cannot possibly happen in ordinary school love comedies, so I'll be slowly bringing them out as the story progresses. For example, the Outdoor Prison/School, the Death/Final Examinations, the Cultural Disaster/Festival, etc.

...Okay. Next comes a furious torrent of thanks. Editor Gibu-sma, illustrator Namanie-sama, Musicago Graphics which did the design, all the advertisers, all the judges, friends, family, relatives, fellow rivals in the competition, as well as everyone involved with publishing this work: I express my thanks to all of you.

I am very thankful. Due to the page limit, I can only condense everything together. I will still have many chances to express my gratitude to everyone in future days. Then I must deeply thank--

You, who has picked up this book. Thank you very much!

Mizushiro Mizuki ~Listening to Slipknot while writing~

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# References


1. ↑ 18782 + 18782 = 37564 is read as "iyanayatsu"(hated guy) plus "iyanayatsu"(hated guy) = "minagoroshi"(kill everyone)
2. ↑ The kanji for Eiri means "sharp."
3. ↑ Ondul Language: "ondul" came from a slurred pronunciation of "hontou" in Kamen Rider Blade and was jokingly treated as the language of the undead, becoming a popular meme.
4. ↑ In Japanese, the same word is used for licking and looking down on someone.
5. ↑ Parody of Mos Burger, a Japanese burger chain. The burger chain's name is being used as a corrupted form of the standard Japanese telephone greeting, "moshimoshi."
6. ↑ The kanji for Akabane means red wing(s).

# Disclaimer

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# Credits

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